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97% cases of crimes against SCs in 2022 from 13 states

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Vodafone Idea signs ₹30K cr deal for 4G, 5G gear supply

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Lando Norris cruises to victory in Singapore GP

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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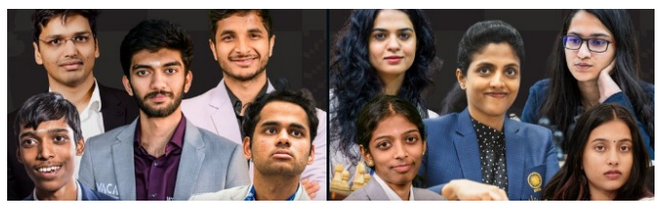
Indian men, women win maiden Chess Olympiad Gold

BUDAPEST, 22 SEPT

India on Sunday scripted history as its men's and women's teams clinched their maiden gold medals in the 45th Chess Olympiad after beating their respective opponents in the final round here.

The men's team defeated Slovenia after D Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi and Rameshbabu Praggnanadhaa won their respective matches in the 11th and final round match. The women's team beat Azerbaijan 3.5-0.5 to clinch the title.

World Championship challenger Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi yet again delivered in key games to help India secure its first title in the open category. Up against Slovenia, Gukesh was at his very best in the technical phase of the game with black pieces against Vladimir Fedoseev. Though it was a laboured victory, the 18-year-old Grandmaster was spot on with his tremendous strategic display. Erigaisi also won with black pieces on the third board against Jan Subeli out of a surprising Centre Counter defense game.



The event was held in Hungary PHOTO: X/@INDIA_ALLSPORTS

Praggnanadhaa scored a crushing victory over Anton Demchenko, as India earned a decisive 3-0 triumph over Slovenia. The Indian men ended up with a remarkable 21 points out of a possible 22. They conceded just a lone 2-2 draw against Uzbekistan while beating the rest of the opponents.

The Indian women scored 3.5-0.5 victory against Azerbaijan. D Harika was at her technical best on the top board while Divya Deshmukh yet again outclassed her opponent to confirm her individual gold medal on the third board as well. —*PTI*

PM, Biden agree on drone deal, semiconductor plant

Talks were on initiatives to boost cooperation in Indo-Pacific

WILMINGTON, 22 SEPT

On the sidelines of the Quad Summit Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden at the latter's residence in Delaware state in the US.

The two leaders discussed several topics, including the MQ-9B Predator drone deal and the setting up of a semiconductor plant in Kolkata.

Biden welcomed the progress towards India concluding the procurement of 31 long-endurance MQ-9B armed drones from American defence major General Atomics as he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to boost two-way reciprocal supply of defence hardware amid common concerns over China's growing military might.

Meanwhile, they hailed a watershed arrangement to establish a new semiconductor fabrication plant in Kolkata focused on advanced sensing, communication, and power electronics for national security, next generation telecommunications, and green energy applications.

The fab, which will be established with the objective of manufacturing infrared, gallium nitride and silicon carbide semiconductors, will be enabled by support from the India Semiconductor Mission as well as a strategic technology partnership between Bharat Semi, 3rdi-Tech, and the US Space Force.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US President Joe Biden as he leaves the Quad leaders summit in Claymont, Delaware on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

The annual Quad summit hosted by President Biden in his hometown Wilmington rolled out a series of new initiatives to boost cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and explore ways to find peaceful solutions to the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

This was a farewell summit for President Biden as he nears the end of his term in office. Meanwhile, Modi said thet he will be happy to host the Quad Summit in 2025.

Biden hails Modi's trip to Ukraine

Biden commended Modi's historic visit to Ukraine last month and his message of peace, as the two leaders held wide-ranging talks that figured pressing global challenges including the situation in the war-ravaged country. At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said "very important" conversations are underway with multiple people on all sides of the conflict. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3,4

US returns 297 stolen antiquities

The US has handed over to India 297 antiquities, smuggled out of the country, during the ongoing visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official statement said on Sunday. With this, the total number of ancient items recovered by India since 2014 has gone to 640,out of which 578 is from USA alone. —*PTI*

'Quad summit highlights divide-and-rule'

China's official media on Sunday accused Quad Summit of resorting to a divide-and-rule strategy to sow discord between Beijing and its neighbours. Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry is yet to react to the summit. —*PTI*

SECURES 5.63M VOTES

Marxist leader Anura Dissanayake is new SL President

COLOMBO, 22 SEPT

Anura Kumara Dissanayake PHOTO: X/ @ANURADISANAYAKE

Marxist leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake, 56, on Sunday was declared winner of the Sri Lankan presidential election by the country's Election Commission after an unprecedented second round of counting of votes.

The election on Saturday was the first to be held since mass protests unseated Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022 after the country suffered an economic crisis.

His accession to the post is a remarkable turnaround for his half-century-old party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which had long remained on the margins.

The leader of the JVP's broader front, the National People's Power (NPP), Dissanayake's anti-corruption message and his promise of a change in political culture resonated strongly with young voters who have been demanding system change since the economic crisis.

Dissanayake, is a science graduate from the Colombo suburban Kelaniya University. He joined the JVP, the mother party of the NPP, in 1987 at the height of their anti-Indian rebellion. In the 2000 he entered Parliament from the JVP. He has been an opposition livewire since 2001.

Having won again from Colombo in 2015, he became the chief opposition whip, a post he held till 2019.

He faces the challenge of determining the future of economic reforms in the cash-strapped country. —*PTI*

Parl panel on Waqf Bill receives over 1.2 crore responses

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

A parliamentary panel examining Waqf (Amendment) Bill has received a staggering 1.2 crore email responses amid campaigns launched by rival groups to ratchet up support for their respective viewpoints regarding the draft law. Joint Committee on Waqf Amendment Bill, also received 75,000 responses with documents to support the respective views. In a statement, the committee asked people to send their comments to the joint secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat, Room No. 440, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi-110001 or mail those to jpcwaqf-lss@sansad.nic.in. —*PTI*

Chiranjeevi enters Guinness Book as most prolific star

HYDERABAD, 22 SEPT

Megastar K Chiranjeevi on Sunday received the Guinness World Records certificate as the most prolific film star in the Indian film industry. "The most prolific film star in Indian Film Industry-actor/dancer is Konidela Chiranjeevi aka Mega Star (India) achieved on 20 September 2024," said a certificate issued by the Guinness World Records. "I never expected to get Guinness World Records. All these years of my film career, dance had become part of my life," Chiranjeevi said, thanking everyone for the honour. He was bestowed with the Padma Vibhushan in May this year. —*PTI*

Israel shuts down Al Jazeera's bureau in Ramallah

DUBAI, 22 SEPT

Israeli troops raided the offices of the satellite news network Al Jazeera in the Israeli-occupied West Bank early Sunday, ordering the bureau to shut down amid a widening campaign by Israel targeting the Qatar-funded broadcaster as it covers the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Al Jazeera aired footage of Israeli troops live on its Arabic-language channel ordering the office to be shut for 45 days. It follows an extraordinary order issued in May that saw Israeli police raid Al Jazeera's broadcast position in East Jerusalem, seizing equipment there, preventing its broadcasts in Israel and blocking its websites. —*AP*

Tirupati row: Jagan writes to Modi, calls Naidu liar

AMARAVATI, 22 SEPT

Dubbing the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister as a "habitual liar", YSR Congress Chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention into the Tirupati laddu adulteration issue and that Chandrababu Naidu be reprimanded.

In a letter addressed to Modi, Jagan alleged that Naidu has stooped so low as to hurt the beliefs of crores of people.In an eight-page letter, Jagan alleged that Naidu's actions lowered not only the stature of Chief Minister but also that of everyone in public life, the sanctity of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) and its practices.

Jagan Mohan Reddy PHOTO: PTI

"Sir, the entire country looks to you at this crucial juncture. It is very imperative that Naidu be reprimanded in the severest way for his shameless act of spreading lies and the truth be brought to light. Sir, this would help allay the suspicions that Naidu has created in the minds of crores of Hindu devotees and restore their faith in sanctity of TTD," Jagan wrote in his letter.

He said it is crucial to note that the ghee allegedly adulterated was rejected and not allowed to enter the premises of TTD. On 20 September, TTD said Lab tests had revealed the presence of animal fat and lard in chosen samples and the board is in the process of blacklisting the contractor who supplied the ghee. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

PM conspired to prove me corrupt, says Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Arvind Kejriwal PHOTO: PTI

Speaking during the 'Janta ki Adalat' event at Jantar Mantar in Delhi on Sunday, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi conspired to prove that he was corrupt.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi conspired against us. He conspired to prove me and (AAP leader) Manish Sisodia corrupt. He tried to taint our image," Kejriwal said.

"For the last ten years, we were running the government honestly, we made electricity and water free, made treatment free for people, and made education excellent... Modi ji started thinking that if he wanted to win against them, he would have to attack their honesty and then hatched a conspiracy to prove Kejriwal, Sisodia and AAP dishonest and put every leader in jail," he said.

In a new political strategy, he demanded answers from the RSS for Modi's actions, in an apparent bid to diminish his stature by implying that the parent Hindutva organisation was the master which should keep its child in control.

The AAP leader informed that he will vacate the Chief Minister's official bungalow at the beginning of Navratri. —*Agencies*

Detonators found on MP railway track, train halted

KHANDWA, 22 SEPT

- The detonators are called crackers and when they explode, they make a loud sound which is a signal for an obstruction or fog or mist ahead

Ten detonators, which the railways terms "harmless", recently went off on tracks in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district, prompting the authorities to briefly halt a "military special train", officials said on Sunday.

The incident happened on Wednesday near Sagphata between Nepanagar and Khandwa stations of Bhusawal division. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is probing it, Central Railway's Chief Public Relations Officer Swapnil Nila told PTI.

These detonators are called crackers and when they explode, they make a loud sound which is a signal for an obstruction or fog or mist ahead, he said.

Another top railway official said that the military special train was going from Khandwa at the time.

"After the warning signal or 10 harmless detonators on track went off, our deputy station superintendent (of Sagphata) heard the sound. He got the military special halted and got things checked. The train was allowed to proceed in just two minutes," the senior railway official said.

The statements of the "patrolling gang of 10 to 12 people" are being recorded and investigations are underway, the official added. —*PTI*

FIRST TIME IN 92 YEARS

India hammer B'desh, script Test history

CHENNAI, 22 SEPT

India reaches historic milestone - For the first time in India's Test cricket history, it boasts more wins than losses. This win brings India's Test record to 179 wins and 178 losses after 580 matches.

Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's mastery over his craft, underlined by a six-wicket haul, proved too immense for Bangladesh as India cantered to a massive 280-run victory in the first Test with five sessions to spare, here on Sunday.

Maintaining a clean slate against the Asian neighbours, India now lead the two-match series 1-0.

Starting from their overnight 158 for four, Bangladesh were bundled out for 234 in their second innings as Ashwin scythed through their line-up (6/88). Ravindra Jadeja supported him with a three-wicket haul (3/58).

Indian players celebrate after taking a wicket at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto waged a lone battle for the visitors with a sparkling 82 (127b, 8x4, 3x6), but there was hardly any meaningful support for him from his colleagues. The day, however, began on a bright note for the Bangladeshis with Shanto and Shakib Al-Hasan (25) extending their fifth-wicket stand to 48 runs. Mohammed Siraj was the standout bowler during this phase as he worked up good pace and hit fine lines, but luck was not in his favour as edges eluded him or fell short of fielders. It left the pacer a frustrated man, evidenced in his constant tirade against Shanto, Shakib, who played a lovely front foot pull off Siraj for a boundary, also received a reprieve as Rishabh Pant missed a stumping chance off Jadeja when the batter was on 17.

During first drinks break, Bangladesh were 194 for four and they might have hoped to further stretch the home side. But Ashwin immediately after the resumption of play changed the complexion of the proceedings. —*PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

City cops crack down on pvt buses in a special drive

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Bengaluru Traffic Police registered a total of 718 cases during a special drive conducted on 21 September, targeting private bus drivers for violations such as drunk driving and the use of shrill horns. A total of 2,057 private buses were inspected, resulting in six cases of drunk driving and 712 cases related to shrill horns. The use of shrill horns or pressure horns contributes significantly to noise pollution. These horns, often modified or installed illegally, produce sound at 85 decibels which is a higher decibel level than legally permitted, causing disturbances to residents and other motorists on the road. This operation is part of ongoing efforts by the traffic police to ensure road safety and reduce noise pollution. Bengaluru Traffic Police have confirmed that similar checks will continue in the coming days to promote compliance and ensure a safer environment for all road users.

—Salar News

CBI recovers Rs 25L from customs official in City

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

CBI has recovered Rs 25 lakh cash from a superintendent of customs posted at Inland Container Depot, Whitefield, Bengaluru during a search in connection with a bribery case against him, officials said Sunday. The central probe agency received the inputs that Superintendent Ramesh Chandra Tripathi was allegedly enriching himself by accepting bribes following which a case was registered against him, they said. CBI and vigilance officers of Customs and Central Tax conducted a joint operation on Friday and Saturday, the officials said. "During the course of this operation, CBI recovered over Rs 25 lakh from the possession of accused Superintendent of Customs," a CBI spokesperson said. *—PTI*

MP Yaduveer asks to ban feeding of pigeons near Palace

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

Member of Parliament, Yaduveer Krishnadutta Chamaraja Wadiyar on Sunday directed officials to ban feeding of pigeons near Kote Anjaneya Swamy temple located at the north gate of Mysuru Palace. Speaking after a meeting, he said this is not only causing problems for the heritage buildings in the city centre, but it is also damaging the beauty of iconic Amba Vilas Palace. Both heritage experts and people of various organisations have voiced their concern about the issue. As protection of birds is also a must, he asked the district authorities to make alternate arrangements to feed pigeons and other birds at alternative locations. *—Salar News*

Preparations for Dasara exhibition in full swing

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

With the Naada Habba Dasara celebrations is all set to begin on 3 October, the Karnataka Exhibition Authority (KEA) is working hard to ensure the success of the renowned 90-day Dasara Exhibition at its grounds in the city. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has instructed officials to ensure the exhibition opens with full occupancy, including the setup of all government stalls before the inauguration. Meanwhile, Deputy conservator of forest (DCF) IB Prabhu Gowda on Sunday saida that dasara jumbos Kanjan and Bheema have been chosen as royal elephants for Khasgi durbar (private durbar) rituals of Wadiyars, erstwhile family of Mysuru. *—Salar News*

City cops form 8 teams in Malleswaram murder case

The prime suspect is a man working at a nearby salon

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Bengaluru police have intensified their efforts to solve the brutal murder of 29-year-old Mahalakshmi, whose dismembered body was found stuffed inside a refrigerator in her Vyalikaval residence.

The Central Division Police have formed eight special teams, including Cyber, On-Field, and Encounter units, to track down the suspect. According to the preliminary investigation the early leads received by the police point to a man from a local men's beauty parlour, with whom the victim allegedly had a close relationship. Reports indicate the parlour worker has since gone missing, making him a key suspect.

Mahalakshmi, originally from Nepal and had been working in a mall and had been living in the rented house for five months.

The post-mortem of victim's body, which has been chopped into 40 pieces, was conducted at Bowring Hospital on Sunday PHOTO: X

The post-mortem of Mahalakshmi's body, which has been cut into over 40 pieces, was conducted at Bowring Hospital on Sunday. It is said by the senior police official that forensic experts face a significant challenge in piecing together the cause of death and identifying injuries inflicted before and after death. A senior police officer speaking to **Salar News** said, Each body part will undergo a proper radiological examination, including CT scans and X-rays, to assess internal damage. Toxicological and pathological tests will also be performed to determine if the victim had been drugged or poisoned before being murdered. Experts will attempt to reassemble the body to examine the injuries and gather essential evidence for the investigation.

Speaking to **Salar News**, senior police official said, "The gruesome discovery was made on Saturday afternoon when the landlord, alerted by a foul odour, entered the apartment and found dried blood at the entrance and when the landlord informed the victim's parents and they found that the body was stored in 165 litre fridge. The murder is suspected to have occurred ten days ago."

The post-mortem report is expected to play a crucial role in determining the sequence of events leading to Mahalakshmi's death and may provide clues about the murder weapon.

The case has drawn comparisons to the infamous Shraddha Walker murder, where the victim was dismembered and stored in a refrigerator by her partner in Delhi. *—Salar News*

DENOTIFICATION SCAM

Guv seeks Kempanna panel report on Arkavathi land layout

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Thaawarchand Gehlot PHOTO: PTI

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has sought from the State government the Kempanna Commission report relating to the alleged illegal denotification of 541 acres of land in Arkavathi Layout in the City.

"Governor has written to the Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh seeking the report. We have not received anything yet from the state government," a source in the Raj Bhavan told PTI.

The commission led by retired High Court Justice HS Kempanna was set up in 2014 during Siddaramaiah's first stint as Chief Minister from 2013 to 2018 to probe the illegalities in the denotification of land acquired by the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) to form a layout in North Bengaluru after people complained about it.

The Commission had submitted its report in 2017 before the end of Siddaramaiah's first term as CM. The report has not been made public though some BJP leaders demanded that it be made public.

The latest missive comes close on the heels of Gehlot according sanction to investigate Siddaramaiah in the alleged compensatory site allotment scam in Mysuru Urban Development Authority.

Addressing reporters in Koppal, Siddaramaiah said his government would look into the Governor's letter seeking the Kempanna Commission report. *—PTI*

Roomie kills man over love triangle in City

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

A 24-year-old man was brutally murdered by his roommate in Geddalahalli, Bengaluru, following a heated argument over a woman that they were involved with, according to police on Saturday.

The victim, identified as Varun Kotian, was allegedly bludgeoned to death by his roommate, Divesh, during an altercation. Both men, who resided in Geddalahalli, had been close friends but had developed tensions over their mutual affection for a woman.

According to the police reports, the two, along with two other friends, attended a party in Koramangala on Friday night. After returning to their residence early on Saturday morning, the group decided to take a motorcycle ride to Devanahalli.

The dispute soon escalated when Kotian tried to flee, but stumbled and fell on the road outside their house. Seizing the opportunity, Divesh allegedly picked up a nearby stone and struck Kotian in his head repeatedly, resulting in his death.

Despite efforts to save him, Kotian was pronounced dead on arrival at a nearby hospital. The police immediately apprehended Divesh. Authorities confirmed that further investigations are ongoing.

Both Varun and Divesh were employed locally, with Kotian working in a factory in Bagalur and Divesh employed by a private company. *—Salar News*

DURGA PUJA 2024

Artists give final touch to Durga idols ahead of Dasara festival at Bengali Association Cox Town in Bengaluru on Sunday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

2 KILLED AS CAR RAMS INTO DIVIDER IN KOLAR

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 22 SEPT

Two people were killed on the spot when the car that they were travelling rammed on to the road divider after hitting an Ashok Leyland truck near Sait Dinne on Bengaluru-Hyderabad National Highway, on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Razia Shahi, 50, and Mehi Moiuddin, 40, who were killed on the spot, while 58 year old Shaik Alam succumbed to injuries at the Life Care Hospital in Bengaluru, according to police sources. Four others sustained injuries and were admitted at various hospitals in Chikkaballapur while two kids sustained minor injuries in the incident. The deceased were natives of Bihar. *—Salar News*

New crest gates for Tungabhadra dam within a year, says DKS

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister and Irrigation Minister of Karnataka, DK Shivakumar has announced the installation of new crest gates for Tungabhadra reservoir within next year.

Speaking at a public function in Munirabad on Sunday, Shivakumar assured that the installation will be done after consultations with the governments of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tungabhadra Board. These new crest gates will be equipped with the latest technology to protect the interests of farmers.

Recalling an incident on 10 August, when the damage to Crest Gate 19 was reported, Shivakumar detailed the swift action taken, including a site visit the next morning, meetings with engineers, and the immediate commissioning of the necessary crest gates. He praised the engineering team, particularly Kannaiah Naidu, for saving over 20 TMC of water, which prevented a severe impact on crops across 9 lakh acres.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Deputy CM DK Shivakumar at Tungabhadra Dam after it was filled for second time PHOTO: PTI

Contributions from companies like Narayana Engineering, Jindal, and Hindustan Engineering were also acknowledged for their role in fixing the damage swiftly, a feat that garnered attention nationwide.

Shivakumar also announced plans for the construction of Navali balancing reservoir, which aims to address silting issues in Tungabhadra reservoir that currently prevent the use of 33 TMC of water.

Highlighting the cultural and religious significance of Tunga River, Shivakumar noted that Tungabhadra dam, a Congress initiative, remains a key contribution to the region.

He referenced Jawaharlal Nehru's declaration of dams as the 'temples of modern India' and spoke about the introduction of Tunga Aarti, with plans to start a similar Cauvery Aarti. *—Salar News*

'Rejuvenation soon for Mysuru Garadi Manes'

MYSURU, 22 SEPT

District-in-charge minister Dr HC Mahadevappa on Sunday assured that the government will take measures to rejuvenate the traditional "Garadi Manes," wrestling training centres that have been a famous in Mysuru for generations. Speaking at the inauguration of the wrestlers' pairing event organised by the Dasara Wrestling Sub-Committee at the Dasara Exhibition Grounds, he highlighted about the contributions of the Maharajas of Mysuru in promoting wrestling in the region. He noted that Mysuru had produced legendary wrestlers like Rudra Muga, Balaji, Uribatti Nanjaiah, Dilwar, and Riyaz, thanks to royal patronage. He announced that the government would develop a detailed project for the revival of Garadi Manes after consultations with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, following the conclusion of Dasara festivities. Before meeting, however he plans to interact with pailwans, wrestlers. *—Salar News*

CM ensures maintenance of Pampa Sagar dam

KOPPAL, 22 SEPT

CM Siddaramaiah PHOTO: PTI

- Siddaramaiah said the dam gates should be replaced after 50 years. However, gates have worked well for 70 years

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the maintenance of the crest gates of the Pampa Sagar dam on Tungabhadra river would be taken up as per the experts' report.

The Chief Minister was speaking to reporters after offering 'Baagina' (traditional thanksgiving) to the river at the dam.

Celebrating the Pampa Sagar dam filled to the brim a month after its 19th crest gate was swept away on 10 August, Siddaramaiah along with his deputy DK Shivakumar and ministers BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan and Shivaraj Tangadagi offered 'Baagina' to the Tungabhadra River on Sunday.

Siddaramaiah said the dam gates should be replaced after 50 years. However, the gates have worked well for over 70 years since its inception.

He also said, "Tungabhadra reservoir is full again with 101.77 TMC water available in the dam. Water will be available for monsoon and winter sowing."

Speaking about the 19th crest gate of the dam which had washed away, he said dam expert Kannaiah Naidu, officials and engineers worked day and night to install the gate as quickly as possible.

According to the CM, the farmers were worried about whether they would get water for their crops. However, there is no problem now after the dam is full to its capacity.

Siddaramaiah said efforts will be made to provide water for the second crop as well. *—PTI*

3 MEMU trains launched to enhance connectivity

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

In an effort to ease commuting between Tumakuru, Yeshvanthpur, Hosur, and Banaswadi, the South Western Railway (SWR) has introduced three new eight-coach Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) train services. These services will be flagged off on 27 September by the Minister of State for Railways, V Somanna, at Tumakuru Railway Station.

The inaugural run of the special service, Train No. 06521, is scheduled to depart from Tumakuru at 10 am, reaching Yeshvanthpur at 11.20 am. This special train will stop at several stations, including Hirehalli, Kyatsandra, Nidvanda, Dobbspet, Dodbele, Muddalinganahalli, Golla halli, Bhairanayakanahalli, Chikbanavar, and Soldevana halli.

Regular services, Train Nos. 06201 and 06202, will begin on September 27 from Yeshvanthpur and 28 September from Tumakuru. Train No. 06201 will depart from Tumakuru at 8:45 am. every day except Sunday, arriving at Yeshvanthpur at 10:25 am. For the return journey, Train No. 06202 will leave Yeshvanthpur at 5.40pm and reach Tumakuru by 7.05pm.

The second route, Yeshvan thpur-Hosur, will start on 28 September. Train No. 06203 will depart from Yeshvanthpur at 8.45 am, arriving in Hosur at 12.30pm. The third service, Banas wadi-Tumakuru, will commence on 30 September with Train No. 06205 departing from Banaswadi at 6.15 am, operating on Mondays only. The train will reach Tumakuru by 8.35 am. *—Salar News*

ADVICE TO YOUNG LAWYERS

Make patience, humility your BFF: CJI

BENGALURU, 22 SEPT

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Sunday said true leaders recognise their strengths and weaknesses, and use their strengths to build others up while seeking help to cover their blind spots.

Speaking at the 32nd Annual Convocation Ceremony of National Law School of India University (NLSIU) here, he stressed on the importance of individuality and decision making with patience.

"The process of decision-making is filled with uncertainty but this is hardly anything to be afraid of because it is precisely in these moments of uncertainty that your character is forged. Whatever your path is in the coming years, your own decisions are likely to have positive consequences and I urge you to embark on this journey with patience and humility as your companions," he said.

Gold medalist Aditi Vishwas Sheth with CJI DY Chadrachud during 32nd convocation of National Law School on Sunday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Highlighting the virtue in being patient, Justice Chandrachud said studies have shown that we have become a generation of short-term gratification.

The CJI noted that a decision made in haste requires our attention and drains our mental health in the long run. It is also unlikely to create long-term positive changes for your goals and keeping this in mind is especially important for lawyers.

Advising the young graduates, he said to deal with the obstacles, one must build a strong support network and spend time with family and friends.

Justice Chandrachud urged the young graduates to not just be great minded but also be compassionate human beings.

Meanwhile, he laid the foundation stone for the comprehensive redevelopment and expansion of the core Academic Block to be named the JSW Academic Block at the NLSIU. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X / @UDAY_BHANU9

Congress appoints Uday Bhanu Chib as new Youth Prez

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Congress on Sunday appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress, replacing Srinivas BV. Chib was currently serving as the general secretary of IYC and is a former president of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Uday Bhanu Chib as the president of the Indian Youth Congress with immediate effect, a party statement said. The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing president Srinivas BV, it added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Cong appoints Subhankar Sarkar as Prez of WB unit

NEW DELHI/ KOLKATA, 22 SEPT

Congress on Saturday appointed Subhankar Sarkar as the president of its West Bengal unit, replacing veteran leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Sarkar has been relieved from his current position as AICC Secretary. "The state Congress will function as the party workers in Bengal want," Sarkar said after the party's central leadership announced his appointment. In a statement, the party said its president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Sarkar as the chief of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect. The party appreciated the contributions of outgoing PCC president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. *—PTI*

SS MP: My 3 gens never paid farm electricity bills

BULDHANA, 22 SEPT

Union minister and Shiv Sena leader Prataprao Jadhav has claimed his family's three generations, including himself, never paid the farm electricity bills. Jadhav was speaking on Saturday at an event on a farm electricity bills waiver scheme, one of the flagship initiatives launched by the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra. "I am a farmer. We haven't paid bills for the last three generations.Neither my grandfather and my father, nor I paid the farm electricity bills," said the Minister of State for Ayush and Health and Family Welfare. Jadhav, said if the distribution panel burnt, he would give Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 to the engineer concerned to install a new one. *—PTI*

BSF foils infiltration by armed terrorist on Jammu borders

JAMMU, 22 SEPT

Border Security Force (BSF) on Sunday foiled an infiltration attempt by a terrorist along the International Border here, and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunition. The infiltration attempt was scuttled by troops in RS Pura border area during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. A thorough search of the area was carried out this morning, leading to the recovery of an AK assault rifle, two magazines, 17 rounds, two pistols, four magazines and 20 rounds, the spokesperson said. Official sources said BSF fired a few rounds of light machine gun on observing the movement of an armed terrorist trying to intrude into this side from across the border late Saturday night. However, the intruder fled back leaving behind the arms and ammunition, the officials said. *—PTI*

Message is clear, Quad is here to stay: Modi

Modi says a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific is the grouping's priority

WILMINGTON, 22 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the Quad is not against anyone, but for a rules-based international order and respect for sovereignty, in a veiled reference to China.

"Free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific is our priority," Modi said in his opening remarks on Saturday at the summit hosted by President Joe Biden and also attended by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

"We all support a rules-based international order, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of all issues," Modi said, without naming any country. China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea.

China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. "Our message is clear -- Quad is here to stay, to assist, to partner and to complement," Modi said.

"Together we have taken many positive and inclusive initiatives in areas like health security, critical and emerging technologies, climate change, capacity building," he said.

He said that the Quad leaders have gathered at a time when the world is surrounded by tensions and challenges.

"India is ready to share its experience and expertise," Modi said in his remarks, asserting that the grant was made under India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health'. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, US President Joe Biden, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the Quad Leaders Summit in USA on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

MODI MEETS JAPANESE PM AND AUSTRALIAN PM

WILMINGTON, 22 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the Quad Summit here and exchanged views to deepen bilateral cooperation further.

Modi and Kishida met on Saturday in Wilmington, where they participated in the Quad Leaders' Summit, hosted by US President Joe Biden. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also attended the Summit. Modi and Kishida reviewed the India-Japan relationship and talked about ways to expand the bilateral relations. PM thanked Kishida for his leadership," it said. *—PTI*

Who's next: Biden forgets about Modi

In yet another gaffe, US President Joe Biden experienced an embarrassing moment during a Quad event, when he struggled to introduce Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Biden, 81, appeared to have forgotten the name of the next leader who was going to speak -- and asked his staffers. "So, I want to thank you all for being here. And now, who am I introducing next?" After a pause of a few seconds, he asked, this time in a louder voice, "Who's next?" A member pointed to the podium, leading to the introduction of Modi. Biden then put his arm around Modi's shoulder, cracked joke.

PM gifts silver train model to Joe, Pashmina to Jill

Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted US President Joe Biden an antique silver hand-engraved train model crafted by artisans from Maharashtra showcasing the pinnacle of Indian metal-working artistry. The vintage piece involves intricate filigree work and is made of 92.5 per cent silver, officials said. Modi chose a pashmina shawl in papier mache box as the gift for the first lady Jill Biden. Pashmina shawls are considered the apogee of Jammu and Kashmir's rich and fine legacy of handcraft. *—PTI*

India announces $5,00,000 scholarship for Indo-Pacific students

WILMINGTON, 22 SEPT

India has announced a new initiative to award fifty Quad scholarships, worth USD 500,000, to students from the Indo-Pacific.

These scholarships will enable students to pursue a four-year undergraduate engineering programme at a Government of India-funded technical institution, said the Wilmington Declaration issued after the fourth in-person Quad Summit. The Government of Japan is supporting the programme to enable Quad Fellows to study in Japan. The Quad welcomes the generous support of private sector partners for the next cohort of fellows, including Google, the Pratt Foundation, and Western Digital, the declaration read. *—PTI*

Hooda says Cong will win with majority in Haryana

SIRSA, 22 SEPT

Leader of the Opposition in Haryana and former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday expressed confidence in his party's ability to win in the Assembly election, saying that the public has made up their mind to form a Congress government in Haryana with a thumping majority.

While speaking about the Chief Minister's face for Haryana, Hooda said that Congress's High Command will take a decision on it.

"The opinion of Congress MLAs will be taken and then the Congress High Command will take a decision on it," he said. Exuding confidence in winning the upcoming Haryana Assembly Elections, Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda said that the people have decided to change the BJP government in the state.

Congress in its manifesto has announced seven guarantees for Haryana Assembly polls which will be part of its election manifesto, promising restoration of the Old Pension Scheme, caste survey, 300 units of free power and free medical treatment. *—ANI*

BJP must in J&K to teach Pak lesson: HM

NOWSHERA, 22 SEPT

There will be no talks with Pakistan till terrorism is eliminated, Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday, asserting it is imperative that the BJP comes to power in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure peace and teach the neighbouring country a lesson.

Addressing an election rally here, Shah also slammed the Gandhi and Abdullah families claiming they have joined hands to end reservation but they will not be allowed to do so.

"After the counting of votes on 8 October, your so-called 'Mohabbat Ki Dukan' is going to be closed," Shah said, taking a jibe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's slogan of 'Nafrat Ke Bazaar Mein, Mohabbat Ki Dukan' which he often used during his Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Home Minister castigated the National Conference, Congress and PDP over the issue of terrorism and said no stone-pelter or terrorist will be released from jail. After forming a government in Jammu and Kashmir, BJP will issue a white paper to expose the role of the three families who had 'biryani' with terrorists, he told the rally in support of J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina ahead of the second phase of elections on 25 September.

Shah said he would like to talk to the youths whom he referred to as "lions". He also slammed NC-Congress leaders' remarks on reservation, and said nobody will be allowed to touch reservation given to the deprived sections, including Paharis, Gujjars, Dalits, other backward classes.

BJP Chief JP Nadda labelled Congress and the National Conference (NC) as "non-nationalist forces" and said Pakistan's defence minister himself "certified" the two parties for carrying out that country's agenda in Jammu and Kashmir

Nadda claimed terror attacks have significantly reduced and said the lifespan of terrorists under Modi's leadership is "only a few days". *—PTI*

Alliance with Cong to avoid hung poll:Omar

SRINAGAR, 22 SEPT

National Conference's pre-poll alliance with Congress for Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections was formed to give people an option to avoid a hung House, party vice-president Omar Abdullah said on Sunday.

National Conference is contesting 51 seats, Congress 32 and CPI(M) one. The remaining six seats will witness a "friendly contest" between Congress and NC. *—PTI*

PIL in SC seeks SIT probe into laddu row

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

A public interest litigation (PIL) matter has been filed in the Supreme Court, seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the alleged use of animal fat in Tirupati laddus.

The petition filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, a farmer and the president of the Hindu Sena, has contended that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), by serving "laddu prasadam" prepared using animal fat instead of ghee to devotees at the Sri Venkatswara Swamy temple, has ridiculed the Hindu religion and outraged the sentiments of Hindus. The plea has said the allegation of using animal fat in preparing the "laddu prasadam" at the Sri Venkatswara Swamy temple has shaken the conscience of the Hindu community.

"The petition has been filed for the benefit of the public in general, who may be incapable of accessing the court themselves on account of being not fully/properly equipped, financially as well as legally, and thus, in no position to resort to the remedy of 'Public Interest Litigation'," the plea has said.

> **Devotees consuming beef tallow in the Temple prasadam is beyond disgusting. This is why Temples should be run by Devotees, not by government. Where there is no Devotion, there shall be no sanctity**
>
> —Sadhguru, Spiritual leader

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that animal fat was used in preparing Tirupati laddus during the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government in the southern state has triggered a massive political row, with the YSR Congress Party accusing Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains and the ruling TDP. *—PTI*

CAMPAIGNING DAY

National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah holds the party flag as he takes a 'shikara' ride during a rally ahead of second phase election of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, at Dal Lake in Srinagar, Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Gujarat AAP MLA, 20 others booked

RAJPIPLA, 22 SEPT

A case has been registered against an MLA of AAP and 20 others for allegedly attacking a restaurant owner in Gujarat. Police registered an FIR against AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava. Report said the MLA allegedly reached the complainant's house and slapped him and verbally abused him. *—PTI*

Satya Pal Malik meets Uddhav, to push for MVA

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

Former Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik met Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray here on Sunday and said he will campaign for the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in the upcoming Maharashtra polls.

Malik, a vocal critic of the current administration, expressed confidence that the MVA will emerge victorious and claimed the ruling BJP would be "wiped out" in the state elections, likely to be held in November.

He suggested the MVA allies -- Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) -- to make adjustments and stay united for the Assembly polls.

Asked about his views on the upcoming polls to the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly, Malik said, "The BJP will not just receive a major blow, but the party will be wiped out in the state elections. Uddhav Thackeray will play the most important role in this election. You need not worry."

"I have extended my full support to the MVA. I will also campaign for it," said Malik, the last governor of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Malik said they discussed the status of Maharashtra and issues concerning the state.

Asked about his message to Thackeray, he said, "As per my information, the BJP is losing; you (MVA) people will win." *—PTI*

Satya Pal Malik *PHOTO: X*

- He suggested the MVA allies to make adjustments and stay united for the Assembly polls

ROW RESUMES

Cong, CPI slam ADGP's report on Thrissur Pooram disruption

THRISSUR, 22 SEPT

- Congress alleged that the mastermind behind disrupting the pooram himself had submitted the investigation report regarding it

Opposition Congress and the ruling LDF ally CPI on Sunday slammed the purported report filed by ADGP MR Ajithkumar which allegedly claims that there was no outside interference in the disruption of the iconic Thrissur Pooram 2024.

On Sunday, news outlets reported that Ajithkumar, ADGP, Law and Order, who was earlier accused by ruling Left-backed MLA PV Anvar of being the mastermind behind disrupting the pooram, has submitted the probe report on the festival disruption.

The Thrissur Pooram, which was held on 19 May, was disrupted, and the government took action against the then city police commissioner and the assistant commissioner.

The Chief Minister had directed the state police chief to file a report on the disruption of the pooram. The reports suggested that Ajithkumar had filed the report, which allegedly claims that there was no outside intervention.

Criticising the purported report, Congress alleged that the mastermind behind disrupting the pooram himself had submitted the investigation report regarding it. Leader of Opposition, VD Satheesan, said the report was a farce.

"The ADGP, who is accused of disrupting the pooram, has filed a report. Vijayan had asked the DGP to file a report within one week. However, it's been four months, and there were reports that no inquiry was going on. Now the accused has submitted a probe report, and it's a farce," Satheesan said in a statement. *—PTI*

Supriya Sule *PHOTO: PTI*

GIVE NEW POLL SYMBOL TO AJIT GROUP: SUPRIYA

PUNE, 22 SEPT

NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule has said they have requested the Supreme Court to treat the two NCP factions equally and just as their party was given a new poll symbol, the same should be followed for the rival group led by Ajit Pawar.

Following the split, in February this year, Election Commission allotted the NCP name and the 'clock' symbol to the Ajit -led group. *—PTI*

'B'deshi infiltrators are a vote bank for J'khand'

KODERMA, 22 SEPT

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday alleged that Bangladeshi infiltrators were a "vote bank" of JMM-led alliance in Jharkhand, and the ruling party would not chase them out of the state.

Addressing a public rally in Koderma as part of BJP's 'Parivartan Yatra', Maurya accused the Hemant Soren government of "failing" to fulfil election promises on all fronts and making Jharkhand famous for "corruption".

"The Bangladeshi infiltrators, who were earlier restricted to West Bengal only, spread across Jharkhand in large numbers, which is a big challenge. The JMM-led government cannot chase them out of the state. The ruling coalition considers infiltrators as their vote bank," Maurya said.

BJP considers illegal immigrants a "blot on Jharkhand's dignity" and is the "only party which can chase them out of the state", he claimed.

With an eye on the Assembly elections due later this year, the opposition BJP in Jharkhand would carry out six 'Parivartan' processions to reach out to the people and "expose the failures" of the JMM-led government in the state. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@COLDPLAY

Coldplay adds third Mumbai show due to popular demand

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

British rock band Coldplay on Sunday added a third show to the Mumbai leg of its "Music Of The Spheres World Tour 2025" citing "phenomenal demand", hours after fans expressed disappointment over long virtual queues on the online ticket platform BookMyShow. The tickets for the new show, set to be held on January 21 at Mumbai's DY Patil Sports Stadium, will go live at 2 pm on BookMyShow. According to reports, the server of BookMyShow website and app on Sunday crashed as it opened the sale for the concerts scheduled for next year. Meanwhile, it was reported that the tickets were on sale in black for Rs 1 lakh after the website crashed. The Grammy-winning band last performed in Mumbai in 2016. *—PTI*

1 dead in gas leak at factory in Jalandhar

JALANDHAR, 22 SEPT

In a tragic incident, one person lost his life due to a gas leak incident at a factory located near Domoria Bridge in the Jalandhar district of Punjab. Emergency services and fire department officials were immediately dispatched to the spot with adequate equipment as soon as the information was received. According to the police, the person was rescued unconscious and later he died. Sub Divisional Magistrate of Jalandhar, Balbir Singh, has ordered a magisterial probe into the incident. The incident occurred on Saturday. Speaking to reporters here on Sunday, SDM Balbir Singh said, "One person was rescued unconscious. He has lost his life. SDM has marked a magisterial inquiry and has asked to file a report within 15 days..."*—ANI*

5 arrested for 'converting' people in UP

MATHURA, 22 SEPT

Five people have been arrested for allegedly trying to convert people to Christianity here, police said on Sunday. According to the police, they received information regarding a "Dharm Sabha" (religious gathering) being conducted in the Tulsi Nagar Indrapuri colony. They rushed to the spot and found around four dozen men and women gathered for the alleged conversion, Senior Superintendent of Police, Shailesh Kumar Pandey said. The accused were arrested under provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, he said. Those arrested included Samson Samual, Amardeo, Vikas Bhoi, Ajai Selvaraj and Rakesh, he said.*—PTI*

Tiger found dead in Ranthambore National Park

JAIPUR, 22 SEPT

A three-year-old male tiger was found dead on Sunday following a territorial battle in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, located in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, an official said. Ramanand Bhaskar, Deputy Conservator of Forest told PTI that the forest guards discovered the tiger's body in the Khandar range, showing signs of injury. "Preliminary evidence suggests that the tiger, T-2312, died during a territorial dispute," Bhaskar said. With this incident, the total number of tigers in the national park, has decreased to 72. Tigers are territorial animals that vigorously defend their domains. To mark boundaries, tigers use methods such as urinating, secreting substances from their anal glands, and leaving scratch marks on tree bark, bushes, and rocks. The territory can extend up to 100sq km, sources said.*—PTI*

97% cases of crimes against SCs in 2022 from 13 states

UP accounts for 23.78% of cases followed by R'than, MP

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

About 97.7 per cent of all cases of atrocities against SCs in 2022 were reported from 13 states, with Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh recording the highest number of such crimes, according to the latest government report under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Of 51,656 cases registered under the law for Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 23.78 per cent of the total cases with 12,287, followed by Rajasthan at 8,651 (16.75 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh at 7,732 (14.97 per cent).

Other states with a significant number of cases of atrocities against SCs were Bihar with 6,799 (13.16 per cent), Odisha with 3,576 (6.93 per cent), and Maharashtra with 2,706 (5.24 per cent).

Of the 9,735 cases registered under the law for STs, Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number at 2,979 (30.61 per cent), the report said.

Rajasthan had the second highest number of cases at 2,498 (25.66 per cent) while Odisha recorded 773 (7.94 per cent). Other states with a significant number of cases included Maharashtra with 691 (7.10 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh with 499 (5.13 per cent). Among the SC-related cases, 60.38 per cent led to charge sheets being filed while 14.78 per cent were concluded with final reports due to reasons such as false claims or lack of evidence.

For ST-related cases, 63.32 per cent resulted in charge sheets being filed while 14.71 per cent ended with final reports. In 2022, the conviction rate dropped to 32.4 per cent from 39.2 per cent in 2020.

Moreover, the report pointed out the inadequate number of special courts set up to handle cases under the law.

Of 498 districts in 14 states, only 194 had established special courts to expedite trials in these cases. The report also identified specific districts particularly prone to atrocities with only 10 states and Union Territories declaring such districts. The rest said there was no district prone to such cases of atrocities.

The report emphasises the need for targeted interventions in these districts to curb the incidence of caste-based violence and ensure stronger protection for vulnerable communities. *—PTI*

The report points out the inadequate number of special courts set up to handle cases under the law *PHOTO: PTI*

MODI IN US

India involved in Russia-Ukraine conflict resolution talks: Misri

PHOTOS: PTI/FREEPIK

WASHINGTON, 22 SEPT

India is involved in a set of ongoing conversations with interlocutors on all sides to find a way to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a top Indian diplomat said on Sunday, noting that there is still quite a bit of work remaining to be done.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said the people see value in India's engagement in these conversations.

"We are involved in a set of ongoing conversations with interlocutors on all sides. Obviously, the people see value in India's engagement in these conversations, and we are able to talk to multiple interlocutors," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters in New York during a special briefing on the first day of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-day visit to the US. "This is not something that is going to have an outcome in the present stage because there is still quite a bit of work that remains to be done," Misri said. Prime Minister Modi on 23 August visited Ukraine and conveyed to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region.

Misri said Bangladesh also figured in the discussions that Prime Minister Modi had in his bilateral and multilateral meetings. *—PTI*

> **This is not something that is going to have an outcome in the present stage because there is still quite a bit of work that remains to be done**
>
> -Vikram Misri, Foreign Secretary

HINDENBURG ROW

Plaint against Buch 'falls short' for probe, says Lokpal

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Madhabi Puri Buch *PHOTO: PTI*

- Hindenburg had said 18 months since its damning report on Adani, "SEBI has shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities."

Anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal has said that a complaint by a Lok Sabha MP alleging impropriety and conflict of interest by capital markets regulator SEBI's Chairperson, Madhabi Puri Buch "falls short" of persuading it to order any probe.

While deciding on two complaints filed by different individuals on the basis of a report by US-based "activist short-seller" Hindenburg Research, it asked the complainants to file affidavits mentioning details of the efforts made by them "to verify the authenticity and credibility of the claims in the recent report of Hindenburg Research published on 10 August." It also asked them to articulate the allegations against the "person concerned" which may constitute an "offence of corruption" within the ambit of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, 'provision wise', as per the Lokpal's order dated 20 September, which was put up in public domain "to obviate the possibility of speculation and misinformation including politicisation of the matter".

Hindenburg Research had in its report alleged that Buch and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged Adani money siphoning scandal.

The allegations were denied by the duo, who said the short-seller was attempting a character assassination. Adani Group had also termed the allegations as malicious.

Hindenburg had said 18 months since its damning report on Adani, "SEBI has shown a surprising lack of interest in Adani's alleged undisclosed web of Mauritius and offshore shell entities."

TMC MP Mahua Moitra had on 13 September said on X that she had filed a complaint against SEBI chief with the Lokpal and said the anti-graft ombudsman should forward it to the Enforcement Directorate or the Central Bureau of Investigation for preliminary probe followed by a "full FIR enquiry". *—PTI*

15 ARRESTED IN ASSAM ULFA(I) BOMB PLOT

GUWAHATI, 22 SEPT

A total of 15 people, including three women, have been arrested from across Assam in connection with the banned ULFA(I) "planting explosives at 24 locations to trigger serial blasts" on Independence Day.

Assam Police Chief Public Relations Officer Pranabjyoti Goswami said that the force carried out the operations in collaboration with the National Investigation Agency. "Assam Police, with technical support of NIA, conducted coordinated raids in different parts of the state on Saturday night," he added.

"Incriminating facts have been untethered after interrogation of the apprehended people and more information about the conspiracy is expected to be known after prolonged interrogation, in due course of time," it added. Police had also announced a cash reward of up to Rs 5 lakh for information on identification of those involved in manufacturing, of the "IED-like devices" in state. *—ANI*

Army and Manipur cops recover arms, explosives

IMPHAL 22 SEPT

In a series of search operations and area dominations, the Army, in coordination with the Manipur Police, recovered a significant number of arms, ammunition, and explosives from several districts, including Churachandpur.

The operation led to the recovery of a substantial cache of arms, including a 5.5 feet rocket, 9 mm SMG Carbines, a large size mortar, two medium-sized mortars, 4 mortar bombs, two pistols with magazines, 9 live ammunition rounds, a single Barrel rifle, 17-meter cortex, 9-meter-long fuse and hand grenades.

Amid the lingering crisis in Manipur, Congress MP A Bimol Akoijam raises pointed questions over the Centre's "inaction", suggesting that such a situation would not have been left unaddressed if it happened in states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Akoijam vehemently criticised the Centre's handling of the situation in Manipur, asking why the government of India was allowing the north-eastern state to become like Afghanistan, which he described as a "banana republic". *—PTI/ANI*

Army officer's fiancée assault: 7 accused get bail

BHUBANESHWAR, 22 SEPT

District Court on Saturday granted bail to all the seven accused in the alleged assault case of the Army officer and his fiancee at Chandaka Road in Odisha's Bhubaneshwar.

The Odisha police had arrested seven people on Thursday after the incident took place reportedly on 15 September, when the couple were returning from a hotel late at night.

Krushna Prasad Dash, Additional DCP, Bhubaneswar, told ANI that they have registered a case under several sections of the BNS. "During the investigation, we have recovered a vehicle and 11 mobile phones from the accused. Seven of them have been arrested, and they have been forwarded to the court. We have also recovered a video and audio clip and are examining the same," he said.

The incident took place on 15 September when the Army Major and the woman went to the Bharatpur police station to complain against some miscreants, who had harassed them while returning from a hotel late at night. Instead of addressing their concerns, the police allegedly tortured the Major and the woman, even sending her to jail without any justification. The Odisha government reiterated its 'zero tolerance' policy on violence against women on Friday and initiated an inquiry into the matter. *—ANI*

Didi writes 2nd letter to PM on WB floods

KOLKATA, 22 SEPT

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote another letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the flood situation in West Bengal, maintaining that Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) released water from its reservoirs without consulting her government, inundating several districts.

Responding to Banerjee's earlier letter to the Prime Minister, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil had said the state's officials were informed at every stage about the release of water from DVC reservoirs, which was essential to prevent a major disaster.

Banerjee claimed that sometimes water is released without any notice to the state government and the views of her government are not honoured.

"Moreover, peak release from the reservoirs lasting for a prolonged period of nine hours were conducted with only 3.5 hours' notice which proved insufficient for effective disaster management," she said in the letter dated 21 September, which was made public on Sunday. In her letter to Modi on 20 September, she urged him to immediately sanction and release central funds to address the widespread devastation. *—PTI*

Villagers move to a safer place at a flood-affected area, in Hajipur, Bihar on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Several trains in Bihar cancelled due to floods

Patna, 22 Sept

Several trains were cancelled and many diverted as flood water touched the girder of a bridge in Bihar's Bhagalpur district on Sunday. "Flood water touched the girder of the bridge at 11.45 pm on Saturday. In Jamalpur-Bhagalpur division, rivers are flowing above the danger mark," a statement said.

LPG cylinder found on Kanpur rly track; major tragedy averted

KANPUR, 22 SEPT

A major tragedy was averted on Sunday after a 5-litre empty gas cylinder was found on the railway track in the Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. Soon after spotting the cylinder on the track, the loco pilot promptly applied the brake to avert the incident.

The incident occurred near Prempur railway station at around 5.50am today in the morning. As soon as the information was received about the incident, the officials of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) promptly arrived at the scene, and are investigating the incident.

The statement from CPRO of North Central Railway said, "A goods train going from Kanpur towards Prayagraj was stopped using the emergency brakes after the driver spotted a gas cylinder lying on the tracks, at Prempur Station at 5:50am today (22 September). Railway IOW (Inspector of work), security, and other teams examined the cylinder and removed it from the tracks. Upon inspection, it was found that the 5-litre cylinder was empty. Directions have been given to investigate the matter."

On 16 September, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed police officials to heighten vigilance and take strict action against those involved in alleged conspiracies to sabotage railway tracks or cause railway accidents. This statement follows an incident in Kanpur on 15 September, where a damaged gas cylinder, along with other 'objectionable' materials, was found near the railway track where the Kalindi Express had halted, triggering an alarm. *—ANI*

Railway officials remove a gas cylinder from the railway track near Prempur Station, in Kanpur, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP SAYS PROTECT FAMILY

Police verify Keralite's background in pager blasts

WAYANAD, 22 SEPT

Amid reports linking Rinson Jose, a Kerala native settled in Norway, to the probe into recent pager blasts in Lebanon, the Kerala police on Sunday confirmed a background check on his family, while a BJP leader referred to him as a "son of our nation" and demanded "protection."

"There is no case or investigation. Our special branch officials have carried out a background check. There is nothing new in it; such checks are conducted whenever similar news reports emerge," a police officer told PTI.

Another police official said that a "precautionary patrol" has been launched in the area near Mananthavady where his family resides following the reports. He said that his family has not requested police protection.

Rinson Jose *PHOTO: X/@SAM6*

Meanwhile, BJP leader Sandeep G Varier called for protection for Rinson and his family. A relative of Rinson has said that he learned about the incident through the media. His maternal uncle, Thankachan, said, "He grew up here in Wayanad and studied both here and outside Kerala. After completing his MBA, he left India 10 years ago. He had been studying abroad before joining a company. As far as we know, he is currently working for a company in Norway."

Rinson last visited Kerala in November of last year and left in January. He said Rinson had called them two or three days before the news reports about him emerged.

Asked about reports concerning a shell company being investigated by Norwegian authorities in connection with the Pager blasts, Thankachan responded, "Sorry, I have no information about that."

A neighbour of Rinson's family added, "There is nothing bad to say about him or his family. To us, their reputation is spotless. *—PTI*

WORLD RHINO DAY

A one-horn Rhino at the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden on the World Rhino Day, in Guwahati, on Sunday. The theme for this year is 'Keep the Five Alive', that emphasises the importance of all five rhino species and the need to protect them from extinction due to poaching of their horns, habitat loss and other human-induced factors ***PHOTO: PTI***

Indian diaspora, the driving force behind PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in the US, with several stops on the agenda including attending the Quad leaders' summit, addressing the "Summit of the Future" at the UN General Assembly and meeting with CEOs of several leading US-based companies.

And continuing a signature move whenever visiting a foreign country, Modi will meet with members of India's diaspora.

On Sunday, Modi will address an event dubbed "Modi & US Progress Together" at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum on Long Island, New York.

Organisers said the event has received more than 25,000 registrations, although the venue has a capacity of just 15,000.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by members of the Indian community upon his arrival in New York, USA, on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Indian PM on US roadshow

Modi's efforts to deepen ties with the Indian diaspora has become a regular feature when he travels abroad. Attendance at overseas jamborees are well-managed and designed events that can, at times, overshadow the official state visit to a country.

In 2014, Modi's address to 20,000 Indian Americans at Madison Square Garden in New York City set the tone for his diaspora outreach.

Two years later, Indians lined up to shake hands and take selfies with Modi at a civic reception when he visited Silicon Valley, in California.

In 2019, at the biggest community event yet dubbed "Howdy Modi," the prime minister addressed over 50,000 people in Houston, Texas.

Diaspora as secret ingredient of Modi's diplomacy

Rana, who has researched how Modi engages with Indian Americans, said the way Modi uses these massive public gatherings is a unique part of his foreign policy..

Diaspora rallies are carefully choreographed public relations events that elevate Modi's image as a global leader, and they help fuel the domestic right-wing agenda that supports his growing personal brand.

Millions of Indian Americans in US

The Indian diaspora is one of the largest in the world, with an over 35 million people residing outside of India as of May this year, according to India's External Affairs Ministry.

Indian Americans, now a community of nearly 5 million strong, have emerged as one of the most influential immigrant groups in the US.

Besides the US, the Indian diaspora is prosperous and well-established in the United Arab Emirates, the UK and Australia.

The growing strength of the Indian diaspora is also becoming more visible as Indians take on high-level business positions and government jobs in the US.

Academics point out that Modi's community events are not just symbolic gestures of engagement, but are designed to activate the diaspora's transnational identity, turning them into key players in lobbying, investment and technological partnerships.

BJP building long-term foreign policy strategy

Strategic expert Raja Mohan told DW that connecting and building bridges with Indian communities abroad has been a major goal of Modi's BJP for decades.

"Modi has taken this outreach to another level and now it is part of the BJP's playbook that has helped the party's presence grow around the world, especially Western democracies where a huge chunk of the Indian diaspora is concentrated," said Mohan, a visiting professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies at Singapore's National University.

Many of these events involves months of planning, money, organizational skills and pulling together disparate groups of the Indian diaspora.

Modi's outreach builds engagement

Amitabh Mattoo, an international relations expert and professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, told DW that Modi's outreach to the diaspora is best described as an exercise in "extraterritorial nationalism" that serves multiple strategic and diplomatic purposes.

"It is also meant for strengthening bilateral ties, cultural diplomacy, economic contributions, building networks and political engagement," said Mattoo.

According to Rana, by casting Modi as a leader deeply connected with a prosperous diaspora, these events also contribute to marginalising dissent and focusing the narrative on India's rise.

"With resistance to Modi marginalized, it also helps foreign leaders to engage with him. For foreign leaders, India remains a key ally, and Modi is the face through which these relationships are brokered, often sidelining concerns about India's domestic policies in favor of strategic or economic coop-

SALAR ساڈا سالار بنگلور

Climate group urges nations to tax oil, reduce methane

International non-profit organisation Climate Group kicked off the annual Climate Week NYC on Sunday, urging countries to tax imports of oil and gas to fund the green transition, remove barriers to renewable energy expansion, and rapidly reduce methane emissions.

Organised by Climate Group in partnership with the United Nations, Climate Week NYC is an annual event held in New York City that brings together world leaders, businesses, activists, and organisations to discuss and accelerate global climate action.

Releasing a seven-point to-do list to get the world on track with climate goals, Climate Group said the UN climate negotiations and the implementation of agreements alone are not delivering the speed of emissions cuts needed to avoid breaching the 1.5 degrees Celsius guardrail.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 43 percent by 2030 (compared to 2019 levels) and by at least 60 percent by 2035 to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Earth's global surface temperature has already increased by around 1.15 degrees Celsius compared to the average in 1850-1900 due to the rapidly increasing concentration of greenhouse gases -- primarily carbon dioxide and methane -- in the atmosphere.

"But global emissions continue at their dangerous levels despite the rapid growth of renewables and the sale of electric vehicles. Coal and oil usage have gone up. Even the US, with its most ambitious administration on climate in history, only reduced emissions by 1.9 percent in 2023," Climate Group said in a statement.

"It's time for a reality check. We can't keep making ambitious commitments but then only half implementing them...Climate discussions often focus on targets we need to reach by 2030, or even 2050. These are important milestones, but when it comes to the results we need right now, we're still collectively failing," said Climate Group CEO Helen Clarkson.

The group urged G20 countries to agree on a minimum new "import tax on oil and gas" to support the energy transition and to dismantle barriers to the rapid deployment of renewable energy to meet the 2030 target of tripling renewable energy capacity.

It also called for governments to rapidly cut down methane emissions and create a powerful global agency to monitor and reduce methane leaks.

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with over 80 times the warming impact of CO2 over a 20-year period. It is responsible for nearly a third of the rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution.

The non-profit advocated for greater compensation for workers to ensure a just transition away from coal and demanded a ban on the relining of coal-based steel furnaces. "Electric furnaces and the production of green hydrogen should be the norm from now on," it said.

Climate Group suggested that governments and businesses prioritise buying low-carbon products and renewable energy, and that all businesses aim to be five per cent more efficient in a year by upgrading buildings and using electric vehicles. *—PTI*

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with over 80 times the warming impact of CO2 ***PHOTO: ANI***

The world needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 43 per cent by 2030 (compared to 2019 levels) and by at least 60 per cent by 2035 to limit warming to 1.5 Celsius ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Poor most hit on fertility front due to lifestyle issues: Experts

Infertility is not just a medical condition but a crisis fuelled by lifestyle choices, with infertility rates soaring particularly in lower-income groups and tier 2 and 3 cities where access to healthcare is limited, a top IVF specialist said.

Dr Ajay Murdia, the man behind one of India's largest fertility chain, Indira IVF, said while advancements in assisted reproductive technologies like In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) offer hope, it is a reality that the underprivileged are hit hard.

"Infertility rates are soaring, particularly in lower-income and tier 2 and 3 cities, where access to healthcare, nutrition, and education is limited," Dr Murdia, founder and chairman of Indira IVF, told PTI.

"Infertility is no longer just a medical issue; it's a crisis fuelled by lifestyle choices that hit the underprivileged hardest. Without action, even advancements like IVF will remain out of reach for many," he said.

Lifestyle factors such as obesity, poor diet, smoking, and chronic stress, which are often exacerbated in marginalised communities due to lack of resources and awareness, are increasingly recognised as significant contributors to infertility.

These issues go beyond personal health; they represent barriers to conception that have a more pronounced impact on those with fewer means, Dr Murdia stated.

"Lifestyle choices in economically weaker sections, compounded by limited access to quality healthcare, are emerging as a central factor in the fertility crisis. The habits we often overlook, particularly in less affluent areas, are now influencing the capacity to conceive," he noted.

The scope of this crisis becomes evident when examining the startling statistics surrounding obesity and its impact on fertility.

The World Health Organisation reports that one in eight people worldwide is classified as obese, a condition that dramatically raises the risk of infertility.

Obese women are three times more likely to struggle with infertility compared to those maintaining a healthy weight, while for men, every additional 9 kg beyond their ideal weight raises their risk of infertility by 10 per cent.

These trends are often exacerbated in less affluent areas, where healthcare support and lifestyle interventions are scarce, he said.

According to IVF specialists, infertility rates are soaring, particularly in lower-income and tier 2 and 3 cities, where access to healthcare, nutrition, and education is limited ***PHOTO: UNICEF***

Smoking/tobacco chewing stands as another lifestyle choice with major implications for reproductive health, Dr Murdia highlighted.

Studies show that female smokers have a 54 percent higher chance of delayed conception over a year compared to non-smokers, and men who smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day experience a 19 percent decline in sperm concentration, he said.

This not only reduces the chances of natural conception but also complicates assisted reproductive technologies, such as IVF where smokers may require nearly twice as many cycles to achieve pregnancy, he said.

- Studies show that female smokers have a 54 per cent higher chance of delayed conception over a year compared to non-smokers

These findings, published by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the National Library of Medicine, underscore the severe impact of smoking on fertility and the necessity of public health strategies to address this issue.

"Late marriages and delayed family planning in tier 2 and 3 cities add to the fertility crisis. While technology helps, the natural decline in fertility with age poses challenges many are unprepared for," Dr Murdia said.

The consequences of these lifestyle factors in lower-income communities extend beyond physical health, he said adding infertility can place an enormous emotional and psychological burden on individuals and families, leading to anxiety, depression, and strained relationships.

This burden is often magnified for those in underprivileged areas, where social stigma around infertility is more pronounced and mental health support is limited, he highlighted.

Addressing this growing fertility crisis requires a comprehensive approach that integrates medical advancements with proactive lifestyle changes and targeted support for underprivileged communities.

Dr Murdia advocated increased awareness and education, particularly in tier 2 and 3 cities, stating, "By making informed lifestyle choices and enhancing access to affordable healthcare, we can create a more supportive environment for natural conception, especially for those who need it most".

"It is crucial to act now to ensure that dreams of aspiring parents are not dictated by their economic or social status.The urgency to address lifestyle factors, particularly among the poor and underprivileged, cannot be overstated. Ensuring a hopeful future for all aspiring parents, regardless of their economic standing, begins with the choices we make to support and promote reproductive health in every community," he said. *—PTI*

Dhaka University plans to reimburse students' losses

DHAKA, 22 SEPT

Classes resumed at Dhaka University on Sunday after a 3.5-month break from academic activities. Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Niaz Ahmed Khan announced that the university has plans to compensate students for the long-term academic losses incurred during the hiatus. He also said that the administration will work to address the emotional trauma experienced by both students and teachers. Niaz made these remarks at the Faculty of Social Sciences on Sunday morning. "We are finally able to return to classes after a long time, but significant challenges lie ahead," said the vice-chancellor. "We have been away from our studies for some time, and we have developed plans to make up for the lost time as quickly as possible. Many students and teachers have gone through emotional trauma, and we are working to address that along with their overall mental and physical well-being," he added. ***—Courtesy, Dhaka Tribune***

PHOTO: ARY NEWS

Case registered against JI Chief in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 22 SEPT

A case has been filed against Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, as well as party employees and officials for organising a gathering in Sahiwal without authorisation, ARY News reported. The content of the FIR states that patients trying to get to DHQ Qayyum Hospital experienced severe disruptions as a result of the march. Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman attacked the current political system during the Sahiwal protest, calling it repressive and run by a small elite class that monopolises opportunities and resources. He underlined that common people are left to struggle while the wealthy and powerful have access to advanced education and healthcare. Reportedly, Hafiz Naeem said that the MQM-P and the PPP have traditionally exploited the people of Karachi, to support his argument that the JUI-F party is dedicated to fighting entrenched political forces. ***—ANI***

Taiwan detects military activity around territory

TAIPEI, 22 SEPT

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) said that it detected six Chinese military aircraft and six naval vessels operating around Taiwan from 6 am (local time) on Saturday to 6 am (local time) on Sunday. According to the MND, three of the six People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, entering the northern and central areas of the country's air defence identification zone (ADIZ). ***—ANI***

Kenya's President William Ruto visits Haiti's capital

PORT AU PRINCE, 22 SEPT

Kenyan President William Ruto arrived in Haiti on Saturday as the United Nations grapples with how to best support a peacekeeping mission of resource-strapped Kenyan and Jamaican forces, which have struggled to contain the gangs terrorising the Caribbean nation. Ruto stepped off the plane, walking passed armed officers on a small patch of red carpet flanked by other officials. He headed to a Kenyan base at the airport where he was expected to meet with police battling the gangs. Kenya was the first nation to send forces as part of a larger effort by the UN to offer international support to Haiti, which has spiralled into conflict and political turmoil following the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise. 400 Kenyan police are in Haiti. ***—AP***

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida during the meet at the Quad leaders summit at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del, on Sunday ***PHOTO: @POTUS***

Hot mic blunder at Quad: China 'testing us', says Biden

Biden admin official attempted to downplay the incident

WASHINGTON, 22 SEPT

US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic telling leaders of the Quad nations that China was testing them, thus reflecting upon the American seriousness of the emerging Chinese threat.

Biden's remark came during the Quad Leaders' Summit on Saturday, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

"We believe Xi Jinping is looking to focus on domestic economic challenges and minimise the turbulence in China," Biden told the leaders at the Summit.

His opening remarks were caught on the hot mic as pool reporters were leaving the Summit venue. Biden was heard saying that Chinese President Xi Jinping is "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest."

Biden added that China continues to "behave aggressively, testing us all across the region on several fronts, including on economic and technology issues".

"At the same time, we believe intense competition requires intense diplomacy," he said.

Later a senior administration official tried to downplay the error.

"I don't think I have much to elaborate on that. It's consistent with what has been said before, and I don't think it'll be much of a surprise that our inside voice matches our outside voice," the official said. China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. It claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. The four-member Quad, or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, advocates upholding a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. China claims that the grouping aims to contain its rise.

The administration has repeatedly spoken out about concerns about Chinese military assertiveness against Taiwan and more recently on the frequent clashes between the Chinese and Philippines navies in the South China Sea. *—PTI*

HUNDREDS INJURED

Hezbollah fires 150 rockets across Israel

NAHARIYA, 22 SEPT

Hezbollah launched more than 150 rockets early Sunday across a wider and deeper area of northern Israel, with some landing near the city of Haifa, as Israel launched hundreds of strikes on Lebanon. The sides appeared to be spiralling toward all-out war following months of escalating tensions.

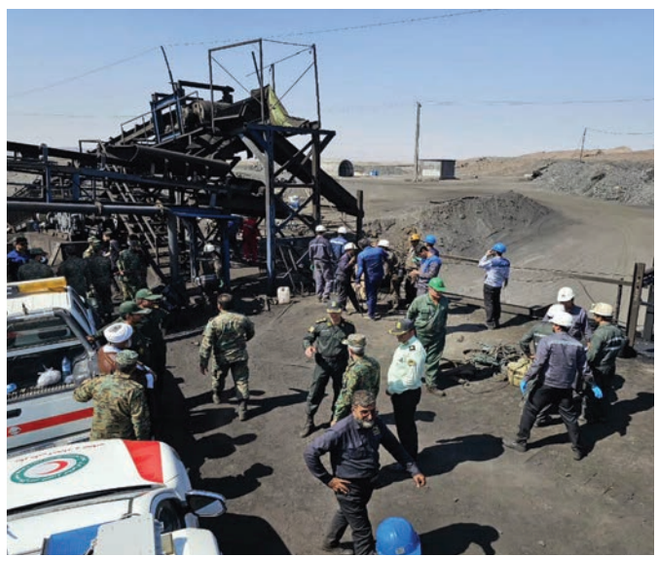
The rocket barrage overnight set off air raid sirens across northern Israel, sending thousands of people scrambling into shelters.

The Israeli military said that rockets had been fired "toward civilian areas," pointing to a possible escalation after previous barrages had mainly been aimed at military targets.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said that one person was killed and another wounded in an Israeli strike near the border. The barrage came after an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Friday killed at least 45 people, including one of Hezbollah's top leaders as well as women and children. Hezbollah was already reeling from a sophisticated attack that caused thousands of personal devices to explode just days earlier.

The Israeli military said that it carried out a wave of strikes across southern Lebanon over the past 24 hours, hitting about 400 militant sites, including rocket launchers. Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said those strikes had thwarted an even larger attack. *—AP*

Iron Dome air defense system fires to intercept rockets that were launched from Lebanon, in northern Israel on Sunday ***PHOTO: IDF***



Miners and police officers are seen at the site of a coal mine in Iran where methane leak sparked an explosion on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

At least 51 killed in Iran coal mine blast

TEHRAN, 22 SEPT

- The report said the deaths happened at a coal mine in Tabas, some 540 kilometres southeast of the capital, Tehran. 70 people had been working there at the time of the blast

A methane leak sparked an explosion at a coal mine in eastern Iran, killing at least 51 people and injuring 17 others, Iranian state media reported Sunday. Another 24 miners are believed to be trapped inside.

The report said the deaths happened at a coal mine in Tabas, some 540 kilometres southeast of the capital, Tehran. Authorities were sending emergency personnel to the area after the blast late Saturday, it said. Around 70 people had been working there at the time of the blast. State TV later said 24 were believed to be trapped inside.

Provincial Governor Mohammad Javad Qenaat told state TV that 30 miners had been killed and 17 injured. Iran's new reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian, preparing to travel to New York for the United Nations General Assembly, said he ordered all efforts be made to rescue those trapped and aid their families. He also said an investigation into the incident had begun.

Oil-producing Iran is also rich in a variety of minerals. Iran annually consumes some 3.5 million tons of coal but only extracts about 1.8 million tons from its mines per year. The rest is imported, often consumed in the country's steel mills. This is not the first disaster to strike Iran's mining industry. In 2013, 11 workers were killed in two separate mining incidents. In 2009, 20 workers were killed in several incidents. In 2017, a coal mine explosion killed at least 42 people. *—AP*

Russian missiles kill 5 in Ukraine

KYIV, 22 SEPT

Russian attacks against Ukraine killed 5 people, and wounded another 40 over the past day, regional authorities reported early on 22 September.

Civilian casualties were reported in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, and Donetsk oblasts. Ukraine's Air Force reported that 71 of the 80 attack drones launched by Russia were downed overnight. Russia also launched two Kh-59/69 missiles from the airspace of occupied Luhansk Oblast.

Russia dropped a FAB-250 aerial bomb on the city of Kharkiv late on 21 September, damaging multiple high-rise apartment buildings and injuring 21 people. Among the wounded, a 17-year-old boy and a 39-year-old woman were hospitalized in serious condition, Kharkiv Oblast Governor Oleh Syniehubov said.

According to Syniehubov, the attack impacted nine buildings, broke more than 1,200 windows, and damaged 21 cars. A 25-year-old woman and a 12-year-old girl were killed in Nikopol when a Russian drone hit their car. The attack injured a 25-year-old man and a 4-year-old girl who were also in the vehicle.

The 4-year-old girl's condition is still serious, and she has small shrapnel injuries to her head, upper limbs, and forearms, Lysak reported on the morning of 21 September. Five people had been injured in Kherson Oblast over the past day as a result of Russian attacks, Governor Oleksandr Prokudin reported.

A light is shone on a damaged car after a Russian strike on a residential building in Kharkiv, Ukraine early on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Among the victims was a 72-year-old woman, who was injured when Russian forces attacked the village of Stanislav with a drone. A man in the city of Kherson was also injured in a drone attack, sustaining injuries to his head, back, arms, and legs. Three people were killed and 12 others were injured as a result of Russian attacks in Donetsk Oblast, Governor Vadym Filashkin reported. *—Courtesy, Kyiv Independent*

Congo frees 600 inmates from main prison

KINSHASA, 21 SEPT

Authorities in Congo said they released 600 prisoners in the country's main prison on Saturday as part of a process aimed at decongesting overcrowded prisons.

Justice Minister Constant Mutamba announced the move during a ceremony at Makala Central Prison in Congo's capital, Kinshasha.

There are plans for construction of a new prison in Kinshasa, he said, without giving more details. Makala prison, Congo's largest penitentiary with a capacity for 1,500 people, holds more than 12,000 inmates, most of whom are awaiting trial, Amnesty International said in its latest country report.

Relatives greet prisoners in Congo on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Earlier this month, an attempted jailbreak in the prison left 129 people dead, including some who were shot by guards and soldiers and others who died in a stampede at the overcrowded facility, according to authorities. Emmanuel Adu Cole, a prominent prison rights activist in Congo and president of the local Bill Clinton Peace Foundation, put the death toll at more than 200. There were also several cases of women raped during the attempted jailbreak, Congolese Interior Minister Jacquemin Shabani posted on X earlier this month, without elaborating.

"We really thank this gesture from the minister and I will never return to this place," she said. Inmates had increasingly grown frustrated with the poor conditions in the facility, including inadequate beds, poor feeding and poor sanitation." *—AP*

DOZENS KILLED IN MEXICO OVER CONTROL OF CARTEL

MEXICO CITY, 22 SEPT

At least 10 more people have reportedly been killed in Mexico's northwestern state of Sinaloa, bringing the number of people killed or missing to more than 100, as rival cartel factions clash, with gruesome violence showing no signs of abating soon.

The latest violence, reported by officials and the media on Sunday, comes after the surprise arrest of Sinaloa Cartel co-founder Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada in the United States in late July, which is believed to have unleashed an internal power struggle within the group.

About 70 people have been killed in the state since September 9, mostly in the capital city of Culiacan, the AFP news agency reported citing tallies from officials and the press. The Reuters news agency reported that another 51 people were missing as a result of the violence. The first of the three incidents on Saturday in the central Tres Rios area of Culiacan was a shootout between police and alleged hitmen, after which unknown individuals blockaded a road with cars and motorcycles about 200 metres from the prosecutor's office.

Separately, security agents were attacked by armed men, who then fled into an apartment building. An ensuing shootout saw three suspected gunmen killed, one arrested and two soldiers injured, Governor Ruben Rocha Moya wrote on X. *—Al Jazeera*

PHOTO: X@AJENGLISH

KAMALA HARRIS IS IN

'Too late': Trump rejects 2nd debate

WASHINGTON, 22 SEPT

Kamala Harris has accepted an invitation from CNN to participate in another debate with Donald Trump, on 23 October, her campaign said on Saturday.

"Donald Trump should have no problem agreeing to this debate. It is the same format and setup as the CNN debate he attended and said he won in June, when he praised CNN's moderators, rules and ratings," the Harris campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillon, said in a statement.

"I will gladly accept a second presidential debate on 23 October," Harris later posted on X.

Trump debated Joe Biden in June when the US president was still running for re-election. Biden performed so badly that he ended up dropping out of the race in July, and Harris, his vice-president, ascended to the nomination.

Kamala Harris & Donald Trump held their first debate on 10 Sept ***PHOTO: PTI***

Asked about Harris's acceptance of the CNN invitation, a Trump spokesperson pointed to the former president's prior statements that there would be no more debates.

Shortly afterwards, Trump spoke at a rally in Wilmington, North Carolina, and said that Harris only wants a rematch because she is losing. The first in-person voting began in Minnesota, Virginia and South Dakota on Friday and some postal ballots were sent out a few days earlier.

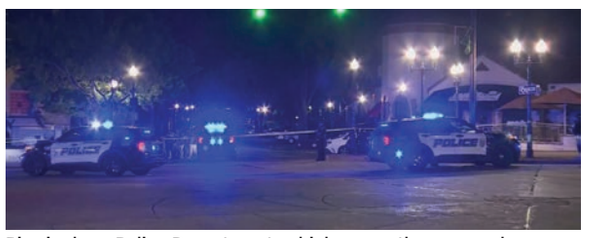
Harris and Trump held their first presidential debate in Philadelphia on 10 September, with Harris, the Democratic nominee for the White House, widely deemed to have won – a judgment rejected by Trump.

Two days after the debate, when Trump had said he wouldn't do another, he cited Harris's invitation for a rematch then as proof he'd won the first.

This prompted the Harris campaign to taunt Trump as a chicken, and Saturday's ostentatious acceptance of another debate invitation also seemed designed to needle her opponent.

The vice-presidential debate is on 1 October between Tim Walz, Harris's running mate and the governor of Minnesota, and JD Vance, a US senator for Ohio.

—Courtesy, The Guardian



Birmingham Police Department vehicles near the scene where multiple people were shot late Saturday ***PHOTO: X@WVTM***

US: 4 KILLED IN LATE NIGHT SHOOTING AT ALABAMA

BIRMINGHAM, 22 SEPT

Four people have died and more than 20 were wounded in a shooting in a nightlife area in Birmingham, Alabama, according to police and news reports.

There were multiple people shot on 20th Street near Magnolia Avenue in the Five Points South area on Saturday, the Birmingham Police Department said in a social media post. Birmingham Officer Truman Fitzgerald said the shooting with up to 21 people wounded happened shortly after 11 pm in the 2000 block of Magnolia Avenue South, AL.COM reported. Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service pronounced the three victims dead on the scene and a fourth person was pronounced dead at University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital, AL.COM reported. Police said the victims found dead at the scene included two men and a woman, WBMA-TV reported. Other victims were transported to hospitals in private vehicles, police told WBMA. *—AP*

NCLAT directs ITNL lenders to pay 75% in Escrow account

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has ordered an interim payment of 75 per cent of the total amount deposited in an escrow account to lenders of Baleshwar Kharagpur Expressway Limited (BKEL), promoted by IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd (ITNL). Passing an order over the plea filed by the State Bank of India, NCLAT said it failed to see any reasonable grounds for not taking any decision by the Board for an interim distribution, as per the Concession Agreement and the Escrow Agreement. The balance amount is to be used for operations, maintenance and other payments. SBI had requested the NCLAT to allow the interim distribution of Rs 175 crore to secured lenders out of funds. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

India to clock 7% growth in FY25, says Deloitte CEO

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

India continues to be a bright spot in an otherwise gloomy global outlook and the country could clock a 7 per cent growth in the current fiscal despite the headwinds, Deloitte South Asia CEO Romal Shetty has said. Shetty, who is the youngest chief executive of a Big Four accounting and consultancy firm in India, said inflation is reasonably under control, there has been a pick-up in rural demand and vehicle sales are improving. "We believe that we would be in the 7-7.1 per cent range in terms of the growth (this fiscal year). But the fact is, still India is in a better position, in spite of whatever is happening globally but we can't say we're decoupled from the world," he said. *—PTI*

Mahindras forms AI division to benefit group businesses

MUMBAI, 22 SEPT

The Mahindra Group has created a focused division on artificial intelligence (AI) to help companies in the conglomerate benefit from new-age technologies, a senior official has said. The idea is to consolidate all the work on AI in a single office to benefit all the businesses, Bhuwan Lodha, the chief of the newly created division, told PTI. To start with, the division is drawing talent specialising in AI from all the group companies, Lodha, who used to be the chief of digital in the flagship auto business, said. The new AI division will build the right AI solutions for all the group companies, Lodha said, pointing out that there are possibilities across the sectors like auto, real estate and hospitality in which the group is present. It will also get the best of the solutions available globally, including work done by startups. *—PTI*

Ex-SEBI chief to head panel on gas monopolies

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Oil regulator has formed a committee under former SEBI chairman Ajay Tyagi to recommend ways of ending monopolies enjoyed by companies engaged in both transportation and marketing of natural gas and city gas retailing. The eight-member committee has been asked to give its recommendations on splitting entities engaged in both transportation and marketing of natural gas, and ending the monopolies of city gas retailers where required, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) said in an order. In mature markets, energy infrastructure is operated on a common carrier principle that gives access to third parties. Any user or supplier could access any gas pipeline, irrespective of who owns it. *—PTI*

Vodafone Idea signs ₹30K cr deal for 4G, 5G gear supply

Vodafone cracks deal with Nokia, Samsung & Ericsson for 3 yrs

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea on Sunday said it has awarded contracts worth about Rs 30,000 crore to Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of 4G and 5G network equipment for three years.

It is the largest deal awarded by any Indian telecom operator during this year.

The deal also marks the first step towards the roll-out of the company's three-year capex (capital expenditure) plan of about USD 6.6 billion or Rs 55,000 crore announced earlier.

"Vodafone Idea (VIL) has concluded a mega, about USD 3.6 billion (around Rs 300 billion), deal with Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung for supply of network equipment over a period of three years. The capex programme is directed towards expanding the 4G population coverage from 1.03 billion to 1.2 billion, launching 5G in key markets and capacity expansion in line with data growth," the company said in a statement.

The supplies against these new long-term awards will start in the coming quarter.

The top priority for the company is to expand the 4G coverage to 1.2 billion Indians, the statement said.

Vodafone Idea was the biggest telecom operator formed with the merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular in August 2018 PHOTO: VI.in

VIL CEO Akshaya Moondra said that the company has started the investment cycle and it is on the journey of VIL 2.0.

Vodafone Idea (VIL) was the biggest telecom operator formed with the merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular in August 2018 with a mobile subscriber base of 40.8 crore. With continuous decline in the subscriber, VIL is now left with 21.5 crore mobile services subscribers as per latest data released by telecom regulator Trai.

VIL had recently raised Rs 24,000 crore through sale of equity and will fund the capital expenditure from the latest capital.

The capex is currently being funded out of the equity raise. For the long-term capex, the company is in advanced stage of discussions with its existing and new lenders to tie up Rs 25,000 crore of funds and Rs 10,000 crore of non-fund-based facilities.

The report has been submitted to all the banks and financial institutions basis which the banks will now progress with their internal evaluation and approval processes.

VIL in the last auction had acquired spectrum worth Rs 3,500 crore to increase its network capacity. *—PTI*

MAJOR U-TURN

Axis, IDBI withdraw their appeal against Zee-Sony merger

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Axis Finance, IDBI Bank & IDBI Trusteeship Services have withdrawn their petitions before the appellate tribunal NCLAT filed against the NCLT order approving the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) allowed the withdrawal of the petitions noting that the NCLT earlier this month had already recalled its earlier order of August 10, 2023, approving the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

"Learned counsel for the appellants submit that NCLT has already withdrawn the merger scheme. Hence the appellants pray that they may be permitted to withdraw the appeals. Prayer is allowed," said an NCLAT bench comprising Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan and Member Barun Mitra.

PHOTO: ZEE.COM

Earlier this month, the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) recalled its order passed on August 10, 2023, in which it had approved the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

NCLT had recalled the order after ZEE applied for withdrawal. It had submitted the Composite Scheme the Merger Cooperation Agreement executed to this scheme stands terminated. *—PTI*

AMID PM'S US VISIT

India signs IPEF's clean, economy pacts

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

India on Sunday signed the 14-member IPEF (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity) bloc's agreements on a clean and fair economy with an aim to enhance cooperation in these areas.

The agreements would help facilitate development, access, and deployment of clean energy and climate-friendly technologies; catalyse investment and strengthen measures for anti-corruption, tax transparency etc. and improve business environment, the commerce ministry said in a statement.

In June in Singapore, 13 IPEF bloc members signed these agreements, while India said it would ink the deals after getting domestic approval.

The agreement on clean economy intends to accelerate efforts of IPEF partners towards energy security, GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions mitigation, developing innovative ways of reducing dependence on fossil fuel energy, promoting technical cooperation, capacity building, besides collaborating to facilitate development, access, and deployment of clean energy and climate-friendly technologies.

It will also facilitate investments, project financing including concessional financing, joint collaborative projects, workforce development and technical assistance for industries.

India has also signed an overarching IPEF agreement, which is an administrative pact to set up an oversight ministerial-level mechanism. *—PTI*

Adani Energy Solutions valued at $18.5B; revenue to grow 20%

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd, power transmission utility of the Adani group, is valued at USD 18.5 billion at enterprise level and a strong business growth is likely to propel a 29 per cent compounded growth in its pre-tax profits over the next three years, a report said.

AESL has a diversified portfolio that includes transmission assets, distribution assets, and a smart metering business.

It believes AESL offers growth unlike any other publicly traded utility/energy company across US, Europe, or Asia. "We forecast total revenue to grow at a CAGR of 20 per cent from FY24 to FY27 and adjusted EBITDA to grow at a CAGR of 28.8 per cent."

This compares to peers growing revenue at low single digits and EBITDA at mid-single digits. Stating that it is growing meaningfully faster than its peers, the brokerage said it believes AESL is a more diversified business.

Growth is likely to propel a 29% in its pre-tax profits PHOTO: PTI

This, it said, is a result of India being still underdeveloped relative to more mature markets, and as it develops and uses/needs more electricity, AESL's transmission and distribution businesses will stand to benefit.

AESL was formed when Adani Enterprises demerged transmission assets into a new entity named Adani Transmissions in 2015. Adani Transmissions then acquired distribution assets from Reliance Infrastructure in 2018 and acquired distribution assets from MPSEZ Utilities in 2021. *—PTI*

Govt to kick off FY26 Budget exercise from Oct

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The finance ministry will commence the exercise to prepare the annual budget for 2025-26 from the second week of next month in the backdrop of the Indian economy recording 7 per cent growth rate for the fourth consecutive year.

The budget for the next financial year would focus on reforms to be pushed to further accelerate growth momentum and measures to generate jobs and boost demand in the economy.

"Pre-budget meetings chaired by Secretary (Expenditure) shall commence in the second week of October 2024. Financial Advisers shall ensure that necessary details... are properly entered in UBIS (Union Budget Information System) before/latest by 7 October, 2024," Budget circular 2025-26 issued by the Department of Economic Affairs said. *—PTI*

Goa businesses seek urgent review of SC's mineral taxation ruling

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCI) has demanded an urgent review of the mineral taxation ruling by the Supreme Court, stating that the increased cost of mining will inevitably lead to higher prices for essential commodities, including steel, power and cement.

The Supreme Court last month allowed states to collect past dues on royalty on minerals bearing land from the Centre and mining companies from 1 April, 2005 onwards.

The possible impact would be a change of goalpost particularly when the auction regime is in vogue post enactment of MMDR (Amendment) Act in 2015, while creating an uncertainty in the mineral taxation regime of the country, it said.

It may adversely impact the downstream industries and lead to mining cost push inflation affecting the entire economy.

While GCCI respects the apex court's decision, it believes that the decision could have devastating consequences in future, for the mining industry in the country as a whole including Goa which is yet to recover from the aftereffects of mining ban in 2018.

The imposition of further taxes/ cess/ levies, if any, as permitted by the ruling, will further impact the economics of mining operations possibly making it unviable with its

SC allowed states to collect past dues on royalty on minerals bearing land from the Centre from 1 April, 2005 PHOTO: PTI

- The Supreme Court last month allowed states to collect past dues on royalty on minerals bearing land from the Centre and mining companies from 1 April, 2005 onwards

INDIA'S COAL IMPORT RISES 41% TO 25.23 MT

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

India's coal import rose by 40.56 per cent to 25.23 million tonne (MT) in July, according to data compiled by B2B e-commerce platform mjunction services. The country's coal import was 17.95 MT in the corresponding month of previous fiscal.

Coal import also rose to 100.48 MT in the April-July period of the ongoing fiscal from 89.11 MT a year ago.

Of the total imports in July, non-coking coal's share stood at 16.52 MT, against 10.16 MT imported in the same month a year ago. Coking coal import volume was 4.81 MT against 5.03 MT in July last fiscal.

During the April-July period, non-coking coal import was higher at 65.64 MT compared to 56.69 MT a year ago. Coking coal import was marginally up at 20.26 MT as against 20.24 MT.

Coal and Mines minister G Kishan Reddy had earlier said that India should increase domestic production of the fossil fuel and reduce coal imports. *—PTI*

It marks the 2nd highest inflow in a month this year PHOTO: PIXABAY

FPIs pump ₹ 33K crore in equities amid US rate cut

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Foreign investors have injected close to Rs 33,700 crore in domestic equities in this month so far primarily due to interest rate cut in the US and resilience of the Indian market.

This also marks the second highest inflow in a month in this year so far, the last one being in March, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) infused Rs 35,100 crore, data with the depositories showed.

According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors put in a net investment of Rs 33,691 crore into equities this month (till September 20).

With this, FPIs investment in equities reached Rs 76,572 crore so far this year. Since June, FPIs have been consistently buying equities. Before that, they pulled out funds to the tune of Rs 34,252 crore in April-May.

Apart from equities, FPIs infused Rs 7,361 crore into debt through the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) and Rs 19,601 crore via the Fully Accessible Route (FRR). The VRR encourages long-term investment while the FRR enhances liquidity and access for foreign investors. *—PTI*

Mcap of 6 of 10 valued firms jumps ₹ 1.97L cr

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,97,734.77 crore last week, with ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank emerging as the biggest winners, in-line with optimistic trends in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,653.37 points or 1.99 per cent.

The BSE benchmark soared 1,359.51 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 84,544.31 on Friday. During the day, it jumped 1,509.66 points or 1.81 per cent to hit the lifetime intra-day peak of 84,694.46.

The valuation of ICICI Bank surged Rs 63,359.79 crore to Rs 9,44,226.88 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

Hindustan Unilever's valuation gained Rs 10,725.88 crore to Rs 7,00,084.21 crore and that of ITC went up by Rs 1,375.6 crore to Rs 6,43,907.42 crore.

However, the mcap of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) slumped Rs 85,730.59 crore to Rs 15,50,459.04 crore.

The valuation of Infosys tumbled Rs 15,861.16 crore to Rs 7,91,438.39 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, ITC and LIC. *—PTI*

UPI FEE DEBATE

75% will stop using UPI if fee is levied: Study

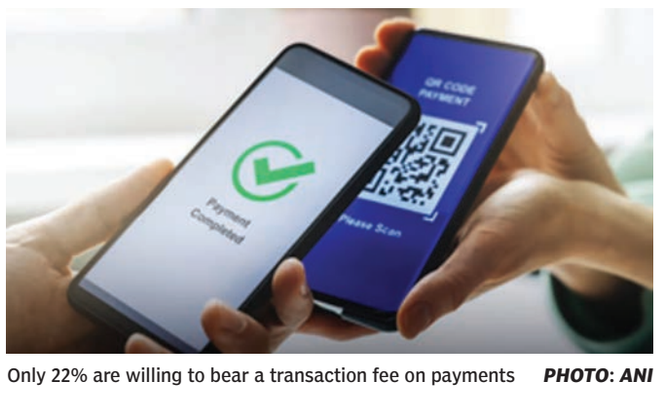
NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Around 75 per cent UPI users will stop using it if any transaction charge is levied on the service, a survey by Localcircles said on Sunday.

The survey found that 38 per cent of users make over 50 per cent of their payment transactions via UPI instead of debit, credit or any other form of digital transaction.

"Only 22 per cent UPI users surveyed are willing to bear a transaction fee on payments, 75 per cent of respondents stated that they will stop using UPI if a transaction fee is introduced," the survey said.

The survey comprising three broad areas claims to have received 42,000 responses from 308 districts but the number of replies on each question varied. The questions regarding transaction fee on UPI received 15,598 responses.



Only 22% are willing to bear a transaction fee on payments PHOTO: ANI

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) posted a record 57 per cent rise in the volume of transactions and 44 per cent rise in value in the 2023-24 fiscal year, compared to the previous fiscal year.

For the first time UPI transactions crossed 100 billion and closed at 131 billion in a financial year, compared to 84 billion in 2022-23. In value terms, it touched Rs 199.89 trillion, compared to Rs 139.1 trillion, the report said.

The survey found 37 per cent of respondents shared UPI transaction accounts for more than 50 per cent of their total payment in value terms. *—PTI*

YMCA Kabaddi to begin from 11 Oct in Faridabad

FARIDABAD, 22 SEPT

The inaugural All India YMCA Kabaddi tournament will be held at the YMCA Multi-Purpose Sports Project ground here from 11 to 13 October. A total of 15 teams from Kerala, Chennai, Uttarakhand, UP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi will compete in the tournament. Two local teams from Faridabad will also participate in the tournament. The qualified officials of the Haryana's District Kabaddi Associations will conduct the competition. Norris Pritam, chairman of the YMCA Multi-Purpose Sports Project, said: "Efforts are also on way to launch a boxing academy at the YMCA complex in cooperation with the legendary boxer Mary Kom." —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Sangram becomes 1st Indian male wrestler to win MMA

CTBILISI, 22 SEPT

In a stunning display of skill and determination, international wrestler Sangram Singh made his mark in the MMA world by winning his debut fight at the Gama International Fighting Championship in Tbilisi, Georgia. Singh won in a mere minute and thirty seconds against Pakistani fighter Ali Raza Nasir who is seventeen years younger than, Commonwealth Heavyweight wrestling champion. Among the eleven competing nations, this incredible accomplishment represents the fastest win ever registered by an Indian fighter in the 93 kg division. Anticipating a smooth transition from wrestling to mixed martial arts, commonwealth heavyweight wrestling champion Sangram Singh's performance exceeded expectations in his MMA debut for India versus Pakistan match. Singh gained a clear victory by showcasing his grappling skills and strategic acumen. Singh has a background in traditional wrestling and an unwavering dedication to training. —*ANI*

SL two wickets away from winning New Zealand test

GALLE, 22 SEPT

The first test between Sri Lanka and New Zealand has been fiercely contested, with the home side edging towards victory by the close of play on the penultimate day Sunday. The tourists ended the day at 207-8, still 68 runs short of their 275-run target but with the pitch offering significant assistance to the spinners, Sri Lanka looks set to wrap up the game. Top-order batsman Rachin Ravindra has been fighting a lone battle for New Zealand. The left-hander remained unbeaten on 91 at stumps and could become the first New Zealander to score a hundred in Galle. Ravindra batted with a clear game plan, combining solid defense with an effective use of both the conventional and reverse sweeps to find scoring opportunities. He also capitalized on a rare loose delivery from part-time spinner Dhananjaya de Silva, dispatching the full toss for six. —*AP*

Hockey Sub-Jr Nat'l C'ship to begin from today

CHANDIGARH, 22 SEPT

The 14th edition of the Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship is set to take place at the Hockey Stadium, Sports Complex, Chandigarh, from 23 September to 3 October. As many as 28 teams from across the nation will battle it out for the coveted title, promising nearly two weeks of exhilarating hockey action. The opening day will feature six matches. —*ANI*

Ashwin reveals how he bagged B'desh wkts

India win the match by 280 runs, retains top spot in WTC table & Bangladesh slips to 6th

CHENNAI, 22 SEPT

Ravichandran Ashwin continued his absolute dominance over batters during the first Test against Bangladesh, returning with a six-wicket haul, and the star off-spinner said he enjoyed every moment of bowling on the red-soil pitch, which is often perceived as pacer-friendly, because of the steep bounce it offers.

Ashwin's 6 for 88 propelled India to a massive 280-run victory here on Sunday. Now, the 38-year-old has 522 Test victims from 101 Tests. The latest masterclass by Ashwin was a tribute to his ability to pick up wickets irrespective of conditions and nature of pitches.

Ashwin's skillsets and a sharp cricketing brain helped him exploit the bounce on the pitch, rather than waiting for the deck to offer spin. "Look, I think this pitch, even if you bowl good balls, you will go for runs. But the bounce is going to be quite daunting. The beauty about red soil is you put revs on it, there is value and there is bounce," Ashwin told reporters in the post-match press meet.

In fact, the Chennai cricketer went ahead and said he preferred to play on such tracks rather than the black-soil ones. "You play on some black clay surfaces around the country, and without naming them, you have to do a lot of hard work, put a lot of revs and see nothing come out of it."

Ravichandran Ashwin with teammates shows the ball after taking 5 wickets at MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

Sometimes it's better to not put revs on it in certain places.

"So, to even understand all these, and talk about it is a fair amount of learning for me. It's happened over the years. Like I said, this one's got solid bounce. I will any day play on a surface like this and get hit than play on other surfaces," he elaborated.

Ashwin also lamented the fact that, black-soil pitches have become prevalent across the country over the years. "The surfaces react very differently at different times of the year. We've lost a lot of red soil pitches over the years, which was a key component of playing Test cricket in India." —*PTI*

India retain team for 2nd Test

The national selectors on Sunday retained the Indian team, which hammered Bangladesh by 280 runs in the opening Test here, for the second and final match in Kanpur. The hosts won the first Test with as many as five sessions to spare, and in the run-up to the series opener, there were speculations that few India players, including pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, could be rested for the second game as part of the team's workload management programme. The second Test will be played in Kanpur from 27 September. Speaking ahead of first Test against Bangladesh, skipper Rohit Sharma had said that India would follow the same process they did during the Test series against England earlier this year. —*PTI*

Test is where I belong the most, asserts Pant

CHENNAI,22 SEPT

The swashbuckling Rishabh Pant on Sunday asserted that Test cricket is where "I belong the most" after marking his return to his favourite format with a sensational hundred against Bangladesh here.

Pant hit his sixth Test century, his first since returning to competitive cricket after recovering from injuries he suffered in a horrific car accident in December 2022, on the third day of the opening Test against Bangladesh.

Thanks to hundreds by Pant and Shubman Gill, India set Bangladesh an improbable target of 515, but the visitors fell way short of the mark after being bowled out for 234 in their second innings at Chepauk.

"I am always nervous before matches, even after hitting a hundred. And this time I was playing after two years, so nervousness there," he added. —*PTI*

FINAL SCOREBOARD: DAY 4

INDIA		BANGLADESH
376*	India won by 280 runs	149
287/4 declared		234

* Runs

Lando Norris poses for a photograph after beating Max Verstappen in Singapore GP on Sunday PHOTO: X/@McLarenF1

Lando Norris cruises to victory in Singapore GP

SINGAPORE, 22 SEPT

Lando Norris survived a couple brushes with barriers as he won the Singapore Grand Prix with ease and cut into Max Verstappen's Formula 1 standings lead Sunday.

Norris started on pole position ahead of Verstappen and steadily built a large lead. There were two brief moments of jeopardy when the McLaren driver first locked his brakes and touched the barriers, prompting concern he'd damaged the front wing, and later when a rear tire brushed another but Norris seemed largely unaffected as he cruised to the win.

Verstappen came in second for Red Bull after a race that was largely uneventful after he held off Lewis Hamilton into the first corner at the start.

Oscar Piastri, the winner for McLaren in Azerbaijan last week, moved up from fifth on the grid to finish third after passing Mercedes' Hamilton and later George Russell for the final podium place.

Norris made a strong start, holding his lead as Verstappen and Hamilton held their places in second and third. Norris began to open a short gap by lap three, a second and a half on Verstappen, in clean air and able to ease his tyres into the opening phase.

With a one-stop race expected, the field settled into working through the early heavy fuel loads, without overly punishing the tyres on the enormously hot track, with the front four in the train separated by seven seconds.

Hamilton, from third on the grid was the only driver of the leaders to start on the soft tyres, pitted on lap 18 for the hards and rejoined in 13th, swiftly passing Kevin Magnussen for 12th but then finding he was stuck in traffic on cars on a different strategy.—*AP/ The Guardian*

Super sub Viní leads Madrid comeback win over Espanyol

BARCELONA, 22 SEPT

Joan García showed why he is an up-and-coming goalkeeper — until Vinícius Júnior got the Real Madrid scoring machine going.

Vinícius went off the bench to assist Rodrygo and score one of his own and Kylian Mbappé added a late penalty as Madrid topped a tenacious Espanyol 4-1 in the Spanish league on Saturday. García made several saves for the visitors before the Olympic gold medalist started an attack with a long pass from his box that ended with an own goal by counterpart Thibaut Courtois in the 54th minute.

But García's only slip of the match let Dani Carvajal equalize four minutes later when Jude Bellingham's low pass squirmed under the goalie. The Madrid right back had to only push it over the line for 1-1. Vinícius rested in the first half as Carlo Ancelotti rotated his attacking bunch.

But the coach sent the Brazil forward on immediately after Espanyol went ahead.

Rodrigo, Vini Junior celebrate after scoring the goal PHOTO:@realmadrid

- Joan García showed why he is an up-and-coming goalkeeper — until Vinícius Júnior got the Real Madrid scoring machine going.

Vinícius then took control, curling in a perfect cross with the outer tip of his left boot for Rodrygo to score in the 75th.

Vinícius beat García in the 78th for his goal after Espanyol lost the ball and Mbappé played his attack partner clear on the break. Mbappé converted a 90th-minute spot kick after Endrick went on late and earned a penalty from Carlos Romero. —*AP*

EPL: Brighton and Nottingham share points

BRIGHTON, 22 SEPT

Brighton and Nottingham Forest played out a thrilling 2-2 draw, keeping their unbeaten Premier League records intact.

Nuno Espírito Santo utilised his bench to great effect in Nottingham Forest's stunning victory at Anfield last week and his decision-making paid off again with his substitutes delivering an equaliser at Brighton to ensure both teams remain undefeated this season. Forest's midfielder Morgan Gibbs-White was sent off in the closing stages for a second booking while both Nuno and Brighton's manager, Fabian Hürzeler, were dismissed for their furious reactions on the touchline in a feisty finale.

Wood's early penalty sparked hopes of a fifth successive away victory for Forest stretching back to the end of last season. Brighton had to wait but two goals at the end of first half – a header from the hometown teenager Jack Hinshelwood and Danny Welbeck's curling free-kick – turned the contest on its head. —*The Guardian*

Duleep Trophy: Arshdeep helps in India D's win

ANANTAPUR, 22 SEPT

Arshdeep Singh saved his best for the last game and returned career-best figures of 6 for 40 as India D thrashed India B by 257 runs to end their Duleep Trophy campaign with a consolation victory here on Sunday.

Earlier, India D, who started the final day's play at 244 for 5, ended their second innings at 305, leaving India B with a target of 373 in little over 70 overs. Arshdeep and Aditya Thakare

PHOTO: PTI

(4/59) then bowled unchanged for 22.2 overs to bundle out Abhimanyu Easwaran's team for a lowly 115.

Arshdeep also recorded his best match figures of 9 for 90, with the distinction of getting out India's T20 skipper Suryakumar Yadav (16) twice in the same game. India B skipper Easwaran once again failed to deliver when it mattered in the larger context as Arshdeep had him caught by Akash Sengupta for 19. Thanks to Nitish Reddy, who swung his bat around for a quickfire 40 off 43 balls, India B managed to cross 100.India B thus ended the campaign with seven points from three games, having won their opening match and then getting a point after conceding the first-innings lead. India D, who had lost the first two games outright, will finish last despite logging full six points. At the start of the day, Ricky Bhui (119) duly completed his second ton of the tournament and remained not out, having faced only 125 balls. He hit 15 fours and three maximums in the process. —*PTI*

INDONESIA PARA BADMINTON

Umesh wins Gold; 3 others clinch Silver

NEW DELHI, 22 SEPT

Umesh Vikram secured gold in the SL3 event, while the trio of Sukant Kadam, Sivarajan Solaimalai, and Mandeep Kaur claimed silver medals in their respective categories at the Indonesia Para-Badminton International on Sunday.

Sukant bagged the silver in the men's singles SL4 event, while Sivarajan won the silver in men's singles SH6 category. Mandeep clinched the silver in women's singles SL3 category.

India delivered a stellar performance in Sarakarta, Indonesia, winning as many as 34 medals in the International Level 2 tournament. In men's singles SL3, Umesh triumphed over compatriot and top seed Nehal Gupta, winning 12-21 21-8 21-19 in the final.

Sukant, who had missed out on a bronze medal in Paris after losing to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan in the play-off, fell short again in the SL4 final, losing 14-21 14-21 to the Indonesian. "I gave my best in the final, but Fredy played an exceptional game," Sukant said.

India delivered a stellar performance in Sarakarta, Indonesia, winning as many as 34 medals in the International Level 2 tournament PHOTO: X

Sivarajan, who had lost to Great Britain's Krysten Coombs in Paris, faced a tough challenge from top-seeded Indonesian Subhan Subhan in the SH6 final, ultimately losing 19-21 15-21. Mandeep, who had suffered a defeat to Nigeria's Mariam Eniola Bolaji in Paris, also finished with silver after losing 10-21 5-21 to Indonesia's top seed Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh in the SL3 final.

Despite the silver medal finishes, the Indian contingent's overall performance was strong, with Umesh claiming the lone gold in singles. Jagadesh Dilli added to India's success by securing bronze in the same category, making it a sweep for India with seven players reaching the quarterfinals.

In women's singles SL3, Mandeep's silver was complemented by Neeraj's bronze. In the men's singles SH6 category, Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy also earned bronze, while Sivarajan secured silver.

Among other Indians in fray, Naveen Sivakumar won bronze in men's singles SL4 category, while Ruthick Ragupathi claimed silver in the men's singles SU5. Koshika Devda secured bronze in the women's singles SU5.

In the women's wheelchair WH1 category, Pallavi Kuluvehalli secured gold, with Prema Vishwas and Anusha Chidananda taking bronze. Alphia James clinched gold in the women's singles WH2 category, and Shabana took home bronze. The mixed doubles WH1-WH2 category saw Poorna Rao and Munna Khalid win bronze. —*PTI*

Mohun Bagan seeks 1st win against NorthEast

KOLKATA, 22 SEPT

Mohun Bagan Super Giant will aim to grab their first win of the season when they clash against NorthEast United in their second home game of the Indian Super League 2024-25 season here on Monday.

The Mariners had shared the spoils with Mumbai City FC in their opening match. NorthEast United, meanwhile, earned a win in their first game, courtesy a late goal by Alaeddine Ajaraie against debutants Mohammedan Sporting. They will now take on the Mariners whom they defeated a few weeks back in the Durand Cup 2024 final and will be upbeat to land their third successive win in Kolkata.

Mohun Bagan have scored in 15 out of the 16 ISL games they have played in 2024. They have found the back of the net in 11 straight games and are now one short of their ISL streak of 12 matches -- between March 2021 and January 2022. The defensively disciplined NorthEast United have kept three clean sheets in the last four games, including two on a trot in the previous couple of matches.

PHOTO: PTI

If they keep the Mariners at bay in Monday's match at the Vivekananda Yuva Bharati Krirangan, it will be the first time that they wouldn't concede a goal in three consecutive encounters in the ISL.

"We have to play better and defend better to win matches. Of course, at this moment I'm upset. I'm working every day with my players to avoid conceding goals. We have to focus on that, keep working, stay positive, and hopefully, in the next matches, we will play better," he said. —*PTI*